

The Four Seasons

by Crescenta

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Summary: Ten months has passed since Jack became a Guardian, and ever since then he's been daydreaming a lot more than usual. One day, North gathers them all up for a big announcement, which is basically the Man in the Moon choosing another Guardian. And this time, things go much more differently than before.

1. It Was Snowing

_"Hey, Hic! Head's up!" _

"What? What do youâ€" "

_The Viking didn't even had time to ask his friend what he was talking about because once he turned his head he was immediately hit on the face with a snowball which brought him to the ground. Jack laughed happily and in success, balancing and crouching on top of his staff. The two females who were way up ahead stopped to see what the commotion was all about. _

_"Hiccup!" the brunette exclaimed in concern, yet with a smile on. The redhead beside her huffed her cheeks. _

_"Oi! Frost! What do you think you're doâ€" " and just like the scrawny boy, the same cut off was delivered to her by the winter man. Rapunzel couldn't help an involuntary giggle at it, which made Jack grin. _

Merida sat up. Giving her friend a smirk. "Oh, now it's on." she gathered snow from both her hands, forming them into a ball and launched it at him. Jack merely tilted his head to dodge.

"Wow, so much for a perfect aim, Princess." he teased and jumped to dodge two snowballs, again from the redhead. Rapunzel ducked from the heated fight and hurried over to Hiccup, crouching down to see if he was okay.

_"You alright?" _

"Fine... I'm fine. Just... trying to think of a strategy." he mumbled, thick brown eyebrows furrowed to further prove that he was, in fact, thinking.

"Strategy? For what?" she asked, even though she knew the answer. Hiccup blinked a couple times and bit his lower lip, nodding to himself. He took Rapunzel's wrist and led her to a nearby tree, telling her to stay here while he executed his idea. Bringing his forefinger and thumb in his mouth, opening a small gap, he blew hard. It let out a whistling sound, as if calling upon someone.

A certain someone.

An ear-piercing high-pitched roar was heard and everyone but Hiccup ducked by instinct. The trees just behind Jack began to rustle unnervingly, and a giant black dragon leaps out, ready to tackle the spirit to the ground. Jack dodged by a hair, and rolled through the snow with his staff, leaving off a trail. The dragon landed perfectly on the ground, a playful look directed at Jack's direction.

_Hiccup neared him and patted his head. "That was good, bud." _

_"Uhm, EXCUSE ME?" the male brunette looked over to the white haired boy. "Toothless could've KILLED me." _

_"Oh please, you're exaggerating. For one thing, you told us you were immortal, and you can't die. And another thing, you started it." tossing the readymade snowball in the air and dropping it back to his hand, Hiccup flung it as hard as he can back to Jack, who braced for it. But the snowball didn't make it through, stopping half way, and simply falling to the ground. "Aw c'mon." _

_"Sorry Hic. Only gave you one chance." holding his weapon in a baseball bat like position, he swung it from the snowy ground towards the Viking and dragon, sending off a set of balled snow. Hiccup raised his arms to block his face but was protected by Toothless' wing. Jack was about to hit again when he was bombarded in the side by a dozen snowballs. He wasn't blown back so he turned his head to see which of them had been the culprit. Merida stood with her lips pursed, an arm outstretched and in a pose to show she was the one who threw it. Rapunzel was behind her, surrounded by a dozen snowballs and a large one she was swiftly trying to form. _

_"Hah! Gotcha! 500 points for the girls!" _

"Wait, since when was this boys vs. girls? I thought it was three on one!" Hiccup complained, lowering the wing of his dragon. Merida shrugged.

"Beats me, dragon boy!" she grinned and was later thrown a snowball from the one she had been talking to. The two had at it, leaving Rapunzel in a fit of giggles. She was later disrupted when Jack interfered with her giant snowball making by grabbing her around the waist and lifting her up.

_"Jack! Put me down!" she tried being mad but obviously failed

because of how happy she looked. Jack called the wind and the two of them were hovering above the ground. He floated over to her unfinished snowball and waved his staff over it. Suddenly it became perfectly round and ready for attack. He nudged her shoulder, telling her to pick it up, which she did. They both flew over Merida._

"Ready... launch!"

Rapunzel let the thing go, dropping it right on Merida's head. Snow splattered everywhere on the curly red mess that was her hair. The pair dropped to the ground with a successful look on their faces. Hiccup stared at his female friend. Then he snorted.

Merida turned her head with a menacing glint in her eyes directed at the Viking boy. "Did you just laugh at me?"

Hiccup quickly placed a hand over his mouth. "No I didn't." he tried saying seriously, failing. The Princess was about to stomp over and tackle him to the snow when she heard muffled laughter from her assaulters. She smirked and gathered more snow into her hands. Rapunzel shrieked when she'd been struck in the face, but she was still in uncontrollable laughter.

"Hey! No one hurts my partner!" Jack readied his staff to swing like he had done only moments ago. "Go Team Jackunzel!"

_"Okay what kind of teaming system are we even going for here?!" Hiccup yelled in exasperation. Toothless had already joined the fight with his smaller reptilian friend Pascal riding on top of his head as he did, making their own separate team. Rolling his eyes and just throwing away all precautions, he joined in, teaming up with Merida as Team Merricup. _

_By then it had started snowing, and Jack's found it that it only snows out of nowhere whenever he was in a good or gloomy mood. And boy he was in a good mood. The snowball fight went on until dusk and there were no clear winners. Everyone, due to so much laughter, could not take it anymore and were just a rolling mess on the ground; holding on to their stomachs while some laughed so much it was so hard to breathe. _

They made a fire to keep themselves warm in the night. Merida and Hiccup were leaning against Toothless, who was already napping his way into dreamland. Jack and Rapunzel sat together, leaning on a log. The spirit had an arm around the girl to try and keep her warm in some way he can. Rapunzel had already fallen asleep like the large creature. Her head was leaning against Jack's shoulder. It was still snowing.

"Hey Jack, do ya mind? I know ya're making it snow. Could you please stop that?" Merida asked, a hand over her face to try and block away the snow from her eyes. Toothless sensed her trouble and turned into a half asleep state to open up his wing and block the snow from both the boy and girl's heads. Jack shrugged.

"Don't look at me, I can't help it. Happens only when I'm happy."

_"Well, I understand that emotions would be responsible for some of

your powers. You must still be really happy if it's still snowing like this." Hiccup commented, leaning his head back. Jack smiled again and tilted his head to rest it against Rapunzel's. He watched as the other two began to drift to sleep while he stayed awake, unable to rest because of his immortality. He sat awake, occasionally moving to change his position so Rapunzel would feel more comfortable. At one point she mumbled something about wanting to lay down so Jack prepared a blanket for her while she fell back to sleep on his lap. _

All the sincere and calm expressions on their faces made him feel assured. And after a while, he closed his eyes and tried to sleep just like all of them.

~!~

"Jack!"

Hearing his name being called out, Jack shot his eyes wide open. He looks around to assess his surroundings. He was sitting on a table, hands tightly gripping his staff with the side of his head leaning on it too. He looked over to the source of the voice. He was met with a pair of concerned purple eyes.

"Jack! Are you alright? You spaced out a little bit." Toothiana asked, placing a hand on his shoulder. Jack stared at her blankly before sighing and running a hand through his white hair.

"A-ah... it's nothing." he tried dismissing it, standing up now. The Sandman pursed his lips with doubt, and a form of sand spelling the words 'DAYDREAM' appeared atop his head.

"Sandy says you've been daydreaming." Bunnymund commented, arms crossed and standing beside the little man. Jack looked at every one, his eyes heavy and looking dreary. He finally decided to simply turn to North, who was every bit concerned as Tooth. He mentally asked the big man to change the subject.

North nodded just a bit and clapped his large hands together.

"Alright! Let's not pay attention to Jack's problems. We must discuss about why I have called you all here."

"It must be important. Seeing as though the last time we gathered like this was because Jack was going to be a Guardian." Tooth said, floating upwards together with her tooth fairies. She looked over to the large open window to check on something and everyone followed suit. Their guesses were correct and the large moon came out of the clouds. "And I guess we're here for the exact same reason."

"Whoa, wait a minute." Jack raised his hand and rose from the ground to hover beside Tooth. He stared at the moon. "Are you saying... we're going to have another Guardian?"

"Apparently so."

2. Rise of Three Guardians

Everyone who was standing on top of the pedestal quickly moved away for the light of the moon to shine on it. They watched in

anticipation as it rose slowly from the floor.

"I wonder who it's going to be this time." Tooth questioned, circling the pedestal. Bunny was busy silently praying it wasn't the Groundhog, just as he had done before when Jack was announced. Sandy scratched his chin for an idea and a figure of a plump woman wearing what looks to be a sunhat and a dress appears at the top of his head. North and Tooth tilted their heads in question.

"Is that... Mother Nature?" the Sandman nodded once they've understood.

"Sandy. Nature doesn't qualify as a suitable choice for a Guardian anymore. She kinda has the weather thing to handle." the man in red pointed out and Sandy shaped his mouth in an 'O'. "But there is a chance that her son might become one... but the chances are low."

Tooth perked up. "Well I wouldn't mind! Nat is a really nice person! He knows a thing or two about being a Guardian I guess." Both men looked at each other with a smirk.

"Seems like Tooth here has a little crush on Nat." the older looking man teased, stretching the name in a sing-song voice. Sandy formed a heart with his sand to play along with the antics. Tooth's feathers riled up in embarrassment.

"N-no I don't!"

While everyone was busy with whatever they did, they completely lost track of the Moon and the pedestal. Jack slowly neared it, to see who exactly was lucky enough to land the place. Then something unusual happened, at least, unusual to Jack. "Uh, guys? I'm no expert but..." after gathering their attention he pointed over to it, the crystal's light splitting into two more others. "...I don't think that's supposed to happen."

"Move over Jack." North said, nearing the object while Jack stepped aside. He narrowed his eyes to see what exactly was happening, and widened them once he found out what it was. "There are three new Guardians..."

"What?! Three?! That's the first time we had more than one in a long time!" Bunny exclaimed, probably dreaded by the fact that the chances of the Groundhog being a Guardian was even higher now. Tooth looked ecstatic about it but tried to hide it from everyone else.

"Three Guardians..." Jack quietly said to himself, looking down. Then he turned up to face North. "Who do you think it'll be?"

North looked serious yet there was a glint in his eyes that Jack saw that was somehow a mix of surprise and excitement. He caressed his white beard. "I have a good guess."

Turning his view back to the pedestal Jack watched as three figures formed. Each of the three had a hood covering their faces from view. The one on the farthest left was a young woman wearing what appears to be a dress made out of fire, and then boots. She had a quiver of arrows on her waist and a bow in her hand. In the middle looked like a boy wearing a cape that reached to his feet, and a suit with thin

rope-like accessories wrapped around his arms, legs, and body. A medium-length book was held in his hands. The last of the three was a girl. Her dress was long and wavy, covering her feet and extending father more. Jack looked closer. They looked familiar to him.

While the winter spirit pondered to himself who they were, the other four already knew. Bunny, once seeing the new Guardians, had back flipped with joy. "Are you serious?! You're telling me Ryllis is going to be a Guardian?!"

Jack swiftly spun on his spot to face him. "Ryllis...?"

"Aw man, I need to tell her. North! We were going to gather those three up here anyway, I'm going ahead." Bunny excused himself, tapping the ground with his large furry foot to make a hole appear.

"No, wait!" Jack tried to stop him to ask him who the person was but the Guardian had already dropped into the hole and disappeared. Jack grunted aloud. He really wanted to know who they were. It's like he knew them from somewhere. North had noticed Jack's small fit and oddly enough, ignored it. He turned to the remaining two.

"Bunny is right. We do need to gather the other three. Tooth, go to the Fall Kingdom and search for Velos. Sandy, go get Kegan." the man of dreams looked shocked and unwillingly to go, maybe because of who the person was. Tooth patted his back reassuringly.

"Sorry Sandy. Don't worry! I'm sure she's not in a foul mood today. The chances of you getting shot at with a flaming arrow would be narrowed down!" she tried cheering him up but he didn't look all too thrilled. Tooth patted his head and flew away with her small fairies out the open window. Sandman gave a soundless sigh, shaking his head while he floated out as well. North nodded, brushing dirt away from his hands then turned to see what the last one was doing. Jack stared at the window, and placed a determined expression on his face.

"North you got to tell me where they're heading; where these three new Guardians live. I have to meet them. I just have this... weird feeling like I know them somehow. I need to see this Velos and Kegan and..." he glanced back at the lit figures and lingered his gaze at the hooded girl with the long dress. "...this Ryllis..."

The man known as Santa Claus let out a deep breath. He knew he should tell Jack the truth and he wanted to do so because it would make the boy extremely happy. But if he does he has to tell him the other thing. 'Bozhe moy why does this parent thing have to be so hard.'

"I'm sorry Jack. You can't do that." the younger-looking spirit widened his eyes.

"What?"

"You can't meet them yet. Not now at least. I'd like for you to stay here and wait for the others toâ€"

"What do you mean I can't meet them?!" Jack said in outburst. "I deserve to, in a way, don't you think? North, this is just... so

important! You got to understand that they look so familiar to me I... _need _to meet them."

"And you will, trust me." North reassured, placing a hand on his shoulder. "Please just be patient Jack. You will have your chance to meet them, I promise."

Jack fell silent, looking down at the ground. Then he raised his eyes up. "Why... are you making me wait like this...?"

North thought to himself for a short while, looking for an okay answer while Jack stared with confusion at his blank and unmoving face. Then his lips curled into a big smile. "It's a surprise."

"Surprise...?"

"Now, now! Enough with the questions!" he started pushing the smaller boy out and to the elevator while the latter had tried to object. "I want you to wait in my workshop. Play with anything you want! I'll be here, being in charge with all of the toy makings."

"Well... okay." Jack finally agreed, now standing alone inside the elevator shaft. North closed the small door for him and the winter spirit raised his staff. "But you have to call me when they get here, alright?"

"No problem. Just have fun around the workshop." waving goodbye the shaft lowers, beginning its descend to the lower floor level. Once Jack was out of sight North let out a deep sigh of relief and walked over to the pedestals with the still lit up figures. He looked upwards and to the moon. "Ah, Manny. How do you think he's going to take all of this?"

And of course, the moon did not respond to his old friend's question, leaving North to sighing once again.

3. Spring Bunny

Bunnymund jumps out of the fitting hole on the ground that he made and quickly observed his surroundings for anything hostile. Sure, he's come here plenty of times to visit his friend but either way you can never be really sure. Where Bunny was at right now looked like a secluded natural garden place. The place looked beautiful and astounding and he had believed every single kind of flora had found its own home here. He looked around for signs of his friend and as he had expected, there was a path of small pink and purple flowers from where he was standing leading further into the garden.

While he walked, he observed the environment. Everywhere he looked there were green leaves and grass as well as colorful blossoms surrounding the place. Occasionally he would pass by small ponds with tiny cascading waterfalls around. He would peek to see that there were tiny unique fishes swimming around them. Whenever he'd look up there was a large covering of vines and other plants that served as a ceiling. He's never seen the place from outside but he guessed the garden had something of a big dome shape.

"Hey Ryllis, you here?" he called out now reaching a certain

clearing. There in front of him was a young looking woman with her back towards the Guardian. She spun around, a paintbrush in one of her hands. Once she was facing him now he had a better look at the girl's appearance. The most distinguishing factor about her was her long beautiful golden hair. It reached to her feet and even further longer than that. She wore a pink and purple long gown-like dress with a skirt the same length long as her hair. Around her neck is a necklace with what appears to be the charm of a light pink snowflake. Her emerald green eyes lit up in delight to see the Guardian.

"Bunnymund? E. Aster Bunnymund?! Is that really you?!" she exclaimed in excitement. Bunny raised opened his arms, ready for a hug.

"In the flesh."

"Oh my GOSH!" she squeals, running towards him and at the same time trying not to trip from her long dress and hair. Once she was near enough she literally jumped into the taller person's arms as the latter spun her around enthusiastically. "I'm so glad to see you! It's been so long!"

"It has, hasn't it? When was the last time I saw you? Was it... four, five years ago?" he asked, putting the short girl down. She shrugged and grinned up at him.

"Maybe. All I know is that I was just there to help with Easter." she added, playfully punching his furry little arm.

"Yeah, and I wouldn't have know what would've happened if you weren't there, mate. You saved Easter for me back then."

"Aww." she pursed her lips into a cute smile and Bunny couldn't help but smile back, only this time with concern. He placed a furry paw on her head and ruffled it gently, causing her to giggle.

"How are you hanging lately, Rapunzel?" he inquired and again, Rapunzel shrugged.

Placing her two hands behind her back, she responded. "I'm fine. Still living in this beautiful garden I made and still loving the job I do."

"That's good to hear." she nodded with thanks and turned back and walked over to the current artwork she had been working on before her friend interrupted. A wake of pink and purple blossoms appears with each step she takes, explaining the pathway of florets Bunny had followed just moments ago. She twirled the paint brush in her fingers and dipped it gently at the laid out paint.

"So, why are you here? Any _particular _reason?" she asked this time, putting more emphasis on the word particular as if knowing very well that it _was _for a particular reason. Bunny's smile quickly turned into a large grin.

"Well, just one."

"Oh? And what would that be?" she asked with much bliss and innocence and ignorance while her companion at the moment looked like he was going to explode if he didn't tell her the good news soon.

"Ryllis, you're going to be a Guardian!"

"I what."

4. Fairy Under Red Leaves

Tooth flew the skies, searching below for the place where the next guardian had lived. She was flying over a vast forest and everywhere she looked there was nothing but green. But she knew it wasn't going to be hard to find Velos. Yes, he did live in a forest but it was much more different than any other forest in the world. And there, at the corner of her eye, she spotted it.

A stand out among all the greens was a certain part of the forest that was orange in color if seen from high above. Tooth smiled to herself then looked at the four fairies that tagged along. They nodded to her, agreeing that that was the place they were looking for. Then they dived down towards the variant spot. Now closer, she slowly dropped down and stepped on the dry leaves scattered all over the place. She looked around; you can't even see the ground with all of the leaves everywhere.

Tooth continues walking, the crunch of each leaf the only sound heard in the entire orange forest. "Hello? Is anyone here?" she calls out but no one answers her. She takes light steps around, distracted by all the silence.

But the silence was broken when she heard a low growling sound. Slowly turning her head to where she heard it, she faces a still pile of red leaves. It doesn't look different than the other piles; there were dozens of them all over the place. Before she could take another step a large black creature with wings suddenly jumps out of the pile and pounces towards her. Tooth falls to the ground, unable to dodge in time, and is pinned by the dangerous looking creature. Its eyes look threatened and its teeth were as sharp as blades. Tooth's heart beat rapidly with much adrenaline. The creature looked like it could be one of Pitch's. Could it be another one of his Nightmarish creations?

The black creature roared straight at her face, making her scream. "AAHHHHHHHH!"

"Toothless, no."

Another voice was heard and the creature's ears lit up and its pupils dilated, making it change from a violent intention to that one of innocence. Its blade-like teeth retracted from its gums and Tooth stared at the sudden wonder. The creature known as Toothless jumps off of Toothiana, and then proceeds to help her up, as if what just happened did not occur. She shakily stands, regaining her balance as well. She looks up to see who had apparently saved her life. Right in front of her was a teenage looking boy.

He was just standing there, busily writing on his brown journal with a charcoal pen. He was wearing a dirty white collared long sleeved polo shirt and dirty white jeans. The long sleeves of his polo seemed to be wrapped with small rope like designs, the same goes for the bottom edges of his jeans. On the boy's shoulders was a fur brown

cape with an inside having the color dark green. He was wearing a furred boot on his right leg and a spring-loaded prosthetic on his left. Tooth looks at it confusingly, wondering why a spirit like him would have an injury so fatal like that. Then she looks at his facial appearance and sees he has a lot of visible freckles and had dark auburn hair with a crown made out of twigs and leaves resting on it.

"Uh... uhm." still a bit speechless with her encounter with Toothless, she just manages to mumble out a few incoherent words. Luckily, it makes him look up, and she can see that the color of his eyes were a bright orange.

"I'm sorry. Whenever I'm busy I tend to lose track of my surroundings, so he's very protective of me when I'm working."

"O-oh... I see." Tooth stutters, nervously rubbing her arm while she does so. He notices it.

"Are you still shaken up by that?" he asks with genuine concern.

She can't lie to him, so she sighs. "Yeah... little bit."

"Let me help then." the boy raises his hand and a refreshing breeze wafts through the air, carrying with it twigs of various sizes and leaves of different colors. The twigs form around and tighten themselves, joining on each other to eventually form a base for what looks like a chair. The leaves follow afterwards, coating the twig chair and acting like a cushion.

Tooth stares at it with amazement. "Wow."

"Please, sit." the boy gestures for her, getting Tooth to turn around. A bit hesitant, but not wanting to be rude, she takes a seat on the chair and suddenly finds herself smiling.

"This is surprisingly sturdy and comfortable." she compliments, leaning to rest her back. The boy nods.

"Thank you. I've learned a thing or two these past hundred plus years." he smiles, letting out a hearty chuckle. Toothless walks over to his side, and together they both sit in a pile of brown leaves in front of Toothiana. "If I may ask, what brings the legendary Guardian of Memories, the Tooth Fairy, to my simple and humble abode?"

Tooth widens her already big purple eyes in sudden realization. "Oh! I almost forgot why I came here in the first place. I came because I needed to tell you something really important... uhm."

"Is there a problem?" the boy raises his thick brown eyebrow in question. Tooth chuckles with embarrassment.

"I'm sorry to ask, but what was your name again?" she sheepishly asks, rubbing her feathered neck while she does so. The boy smiles still.

"Hiccup Velos, madam."

"Right, right." she playfully bonks her head, now remembering his

name. "Well, you see Hiccup. I came here to tell you that you've been chosen."

Hiccup suddenly looks serious. "Chosen? By chosen you have to mean thatâ€œ"

"Yes. Hiccup, you're going to be a Guardian." Tooth watches the expressions Hiccup makes on his face. First it started with seriousness, followed by complete surprise, then shock, and then clear delight.

"A-are you serious? Me? A Guardian? I can't believe it!" he turns to his friend sitting beside him and Toothless curls its mouth up to face an awkward looking smile, showing how much he was happy for his companion. Hiccup stood up and looked like he was about to jump for joy when he stopped and placed a blank face on. "That's... wow."

"Is something the matter?" Tooth asks, this time the one concerned. Hic looks at her.

"No. Nothing's the matter. It's just... me... a Guardian... I never thought... I'd actually be known, be believed in by kids..." he gives her a shy smile. "It's amazing."

Tooth understands what he's feeling at the moment and reassuringly places a hand on his shoulder. "You're nervous, aren't you?"

Hiccup shrugs and is the one who sheepishly smiles this time. "Kinda?"

"Well, no worries. Everything will be perfectly fine." she chimes, pulling her hand back from his shoulder. Tooth then brings out her wings and lifts herself from the ground. "So come on now. Let's head over to the North Pole so we can make you a Guardian." Hiccup nods, unclipping his cape and taking off his crown, letting the wind carry them further into the forest. He hops over to Toothless and fastens his prosthetic foot to the mechanical hook connected to Toothless' saddle. Tooth watches for a moment before snapping out of it and remembering to ask something.

"Oh, right. I was wondering, what happened to your foot? Did you get mixed up in something dangerous?" Hiccup and Toothless stop from adjusting themselves to stare at Tooth blankly again, this time together. After a second or two they glance up and down to each other then back at the hovering fairy.

"I don't know. It's just... a prosthetic since forever?"

"Don't you have a friend who's an amazing healer? Why don't you let her heal it?" she suggest and Hiccup just shakes his head.

"I've done that before but she says it had been cut off and she can't really make my foot grow back. I just... don't remember what happened to me."

5. Summer Sand

Sandy walked through a forest as light emanates from the setting sun through the woods. He looks around, checking to see if anyone was

around. It was hard tracking down and looking for this Kegan. Unlike the other two, she didn't permanently live somewhere but she would often stay at a certain Cliffside around here. Sandy looked for the cliff and eventually just followed the light source until he found himself out of the forest. There, in front of him was a pointed Cliffside, as well as a red headed woman with her back towards him.

With a sigh of relief that he finally found her, he starts to walk toward her. Taking just one step, the girl swerves around, now facing him with this alerted look on her face. She held with her a scarlet colored bow armed with a red glowing arrow. Sandy waved in acknowledgement but then she raised her bow up in a striking position. Sandy began to panic.

"Get down!" she shouted and the little man followed her order. He dropped to the ground, face first, and was expecting her to be aiming her bow and arrow defensively at him. But in fact that was not the case, and her aim was focused straight ahead. Turning around to see, he spots a large black bear charging towards them from within the forest. Something about the animal looked and felt wrong, as if it wasn't real or something.

The girl breathed heavily and released, the arrow shooting across the air and hitting the creature headfirst, almost sending it tumbling back. Sandy watched in astonishment as the once angered creature slowly start turning the same color of red as the arrow as well as shrink down to the size of a cub, which it has fully become. It looked around, searching and wandering in place.

"You're safe now, you can go home." she quietly said, a hand out towards the cub, almost in a reassuring manner. The small animal looked at her and let out what sounds almost like a thankful cry and starts fading away and disappearing, the pieces floating up into the sky until they're gone. Sandy panted a bit. He felt his heart beating quickly with the sudden encounter.

The girl headed over to his side, helping him up. "Sorry 'bout that. The meaner ones almost attack me whenever the sun starts setting." she commented, bringing Sandy to his feet. Upon closer inspection, her appearance and her entire look seems off putting of someone with her personality. She had on her a flow red short dress that was single strapped, leading up to her left shoulder. It reached only up to above her knee on her left then was going downwards to her right until it reached her shin. On her feet is a pair of white heeled boots with crimson linings on the edges. She brushed away part of her fiery red hair out of her face and let her scarlet red eyes fix upon Sandy with an interested gleam. "Heeeey, I know you."

Dusting the dirt off of himself Sandy felt honored to be known from this certain spirit and nodded to her. "You're that famous Guardian all the kids keep talking about. What's your name again...?" she wondered aloud, even scratching her chin in a thinking position. Sandy smiled and opened his mouth as if he was going to introduce himself but the redhead had cut him off. "Ah right, Man Sand." he pouted, disliking the apparent new name.

The girl walked about and around Sandy, examining his every feature. "So what're you doing here, little man? Were you just passing by or did you actually want to see me?" Sandy lit up at the question, and

she stopped in place now that he's ready to answer. A series of sand figures appear at the top of his head which started out slow but he ends up rapidly speeding up to the point the sand looked like it wasn't forming anything coherent. The spirit tilted her head.

"What's that? I'm sorry man, but I can't understand. But you can't speak, huh? There's no problem with that, just let me see what's on your mind." she moved a little closer to the Guardian and crouched down so that their faces were in level. Sandy watched as she lifted her right hand up and he saw that it was glowing a faint red color. He didn't react too much when she placed her glowing hand on top of his head. He felt a warm sensation suddenly spreading all over his body, and presumably the area where his heart was at. He saw her eyes glint with knowledge which was quickly replaced with an emotion of complete shock.

Jerking her hand back and standing up straight, she stared at the shorter man and exclaimed. "I'm going to be a GUARDIAN?!" Sandy stepped back in surprise. How did she know? What did she do? What in the world just happened a second ago? While the girl seemed to be a mess of sudden emotions, she managed to make out the Guardian's own look of surprise. "W-what? What are you fussing about?"

Sandy waved his arms around while he formed a sand figure of her hand over his head as well as a lot of question marks. The girl furrowed her red eyebrows. "Are you asking me about what happened just now?" he furiously nodded his head, almost looking desperate for an answer. A second later the girl mumbled a 'pfft' and waved it all away. "That was nothing! Don't mind yourself too much about it!" she dismissed the odd scene that occurred and began walking nearer to the edge of the cliff. She took careful steps and just stood there, letting the ocean breeze hit her face and make her hair slightly flow in the wind. She took a deep breath, staring at the sun that looked like it still wasn't ready to set. "I just can't believe it... _me... a Guardian."

She bit her lower lip and started hopping, almost dancing in joy. "I'M GOING TO BE A GUARDIAN! ME! THE SPIRIT OF SUMMER, MERIDA KEGAN!"

Sandy sighed in the background while Merida was doing her apparent happy dance. But he let out a small smile, happy for her.

6. Please Tell Me You Remember

Back at the North Pole and particularly inside North's Workshop, an impatient winter guardian pace anxiously inside. He was admiring the more experienced Guardian's work for the first three minutes he's been there but for the rest he was doing what he was now. He was so anxious that the whole room had already begun to snow. He honestly wanted to leave and go and meet the three new Guardians himself much earlier from now but when he tried opening the door, it was locked. He could see the silhouettes of two Yetis standing on the other side, which prompted him on trying to actually kick the door down, which resulted in a fail.

Jack would've gone through the window and fly off but they were shut tight and were never meant to be opened; it explains things because

they _were _in the North Pole after all. Jack clenched his teeth and firmly held his staff in his right hand. He just wanted to know who they are, and if he knew them somehow or if they knew him. Sure he could wait, but he honestly felt like he would die if he didn't get to meet them in that instant. The feelings he held about it were complicated.

By this time the room looked like it was hit with a sudden snowstorm. Snow was piling up in the corners and the wooden floor was almost completely frozen already. Jack didn't notice and almost looked like he didn't honestly care at the moment. He suddenly heard the lock on the door spinning and clicking as it creaked open. Jack stopped from pacing and stood there and watched as North stuck his head inside owlshly. The big man's initial smile towards Jack was replaced with a look of genuine confusion as to why his private room had a blanket of snow on it. He was internally screaming, in Jack's perspective, but North shook it all away and regained his smile once again. "Jack, they're here."

Jack thought he would be excited and he'd rush out immediately once they'd open the door but... he didn't do that. He stood there, both hands holding his staff close to his chest, and an expression on his face that held a sudden hint of both fear and doubt. What if he met them now and they weren't familiar at all? What if he met them now and he didn't know any of them? What if he was just over thinking all of this? What would he do then? North gave him a look of concern, mentioning his name to catch his attention. Jack took a deep breath and swallowed the lump in his throat.

He took slow steps towards the door and North opened it wide for him. The light from outside shone brightly into the dimly lit room. Jack had to adjust to the light for a moment before he manages to see things perfectly clear now. To see the three new Guardians.

The three of them were standing just outside of the Workshop and was looking around the inside balcony. Hiccup was standing beside Toothless, almost leaning on the black dragon while he jotted down things on his brown journal. Colored leaves twirled around him, circling him in a small and slow version of a tornado. Merida leaned her arms against the wooden railing, observing the whole place and all the creatures who worked on the toys down below. Her bow hung loosely behind her back together with a quiver with nothing in it. Rapunzel stared at everything in wonder and awe, her eyes shining with curiosity.

"Wow... this place is just so... breathtaking!" the girl with the blonde hair said, mouth agape as she continued to observe. North coughed to grab their attention, and everyone turned to the larger man. Rapunzel managed to lay her eyes on Jack which caused her lips to curl up into a friendly smile. Jack stood there, staring. "Oh, well, hello!" she walked over to the white haired boy, whose gaze never left her. Once she was close enough she stopped and lifted a hand towards him. "I've heard a lot about you from Bunny. Jack Frost, Spirit of Winter, right? It's finally great to meetâ€" "

Rapunzel didn't even have time to finish her sentence when Jack abruptly cut her off by instantly pulling her into a hug, which prompted him to drop his staff to the ground, something no one would expect him to do, together with the hug. The weapon of choice fell with a sort of clang when the action was performed. "â€"you." Jack

had his arms around her neck and his right hand cupping the back of her head. He held her closely and tightly and didn't seem like he was getting ready to let go of her soon. Everyone stood in much surprise, eyes widened at the event happening before them. The girl nervously held her hands up, not returning the hug back and looking like she didn't want to either.

Jack shut his eyes closed and buried his face in her shoulder. He let out a breath that felt like it was held for a long time. After a long and agonizing silence, he spoke up, mumbling. "You're alive..."

"Wh-what did you say?" she stuttered. Jack finally broke the hug but never fully left. His cold hands remained but this time holding her face delicately. His eyes looked wet with tears but none actually fell.

He brushed a thumb over her cheek. "You're alive... you're actually alive!" he said loudly, happiness ringing in the tone of his voice. "You've been gone for so long I... I just thought... I lost you and..." Rapunzel suddenly looked frightened a bit at what was happening here. Hiccup and Merida looked at each other with the boy having a sincerely confused look on his face and the girl looking angered. Toothless growled, eyes looking hostile and directed towards the frost boy. The Four Guardians looked at each other, searching for answers. Bunny leaned in close to North.

"Does he... know them?" he asked and North simply nodded. His bulky arms were crossed and his lips were in a thin line. Everything about his expression was plain and blank and basically unreadable.

"A-alive? G-gone? Wha-what're you saying...?" Rapunzel asked but was reluctant to. Jack shook his head, almost trying to ignore her question.

"It... it doesn't matter! I'm just really so happy that you'reâ€" "

Suddenly Jack was met with a flaming fist to his face, sending him apart from Rapunzel and back to hit the wall. Tooth rushed to Jack's side right after, checking to see if he's alright. They all turned back to see Merida standing with a clenched flaming right fist and eyes flaring with seriousness. Once Rapunzel was out of Jack's grasp she rushed immediately to Hiccup's side, holding his arm. The boy didn't mind and had the same blank face North had earlier. The dragon stepped beside the redhead while they both looked menacing. Jack sat up with the help of Tooth and placed a hand to his face and touched the burnt mark she had left. He stared with wide eyes at the girl. "What...?"

"I don't care if you're a Guardian or if you're one of us. Don't you even dare speak to Rapunzel like that ever again." she threatened.

"Like...what?"

"All that nonsense! She's alive?! Of course she's alive you inconsiderate punk!" she yelled, even gesturing to the girl to prove her point a bit more. Eyes were placed on her again, making her take

a step behind the brunette. Hiccup patted her hand, quietly telling her it was going to be fine. Jack furrowed his eyebrows.

"What's nonsense? I'm not making this up! You know that, Merida!" hearing her name, a nerve cracked in her head. She formed her hands into fists and both of them flared up. She stomped towards him and immediately grabbed the collar of his blue hoodie. The flames from her hands began singeing the fabric and almost searing his chin. Tooth and Sandy tried to step in but stepped back when Toothless growled at them. They helplessly watched their friend get burnt while sweat fell from his face with all the heat.

Merida's scarlet eyes glared through Jack's blue hues. "How the hell do you know my name." she whispered with much contempt, and Jack only furrowed his eyebrows more and in total confusion.

"Merida, stop it." Hiccup spoke up, finally trying to step between them. "This is completely ridiculous."

"What's ridiculous is what he's saying, that's what!" she angrily responded, her hair standing up and taking the semblance of an open flame. Jack tried prying Merida's hands away but doing so would burn his hands.

"H-hot..." he managed to say and all the Guardians began to get concerned. Jack was a winter spirit and was all about the cold. The heat was killing him, literally speaking. Hiccup's look was dead serious.

"Merida, I mean it. Let him go." his voice was commanding and Merida reluctantly followed. She let go and Jack leaned with his back against the wall again, his hands rubbing his burnt chin and neck while he heaves for the cool air. Merida walked back to her two companions, Toothless following suit. While he was offered a cold glass of water, Jack this time looked at the boy who had apparently saved him.

"Thanks Hiccup..."

"You're... welcome." he replied, almost with hesitance.

"I'm glad at least you understand. I wouldn't have known what I'd do if you weren't here." he stood straight letting out a breath of relief. He was about to jokingly smile when he saw that Hiccup was still serious. Jack licked his dry lips, cracked from the earlier heat. "Right...?"

"I'm sorry... Jack, was it?" just this one sentence was enough of an explanation. "But I have no idea what you're talking about." Jack leaned back again and was beyond confused. What in the world happened to them?

"I don't... understand what's... going on." Tooth muttered and looked over to North. Everyone did too since the man looked the least bit surprised with everything that's just occurred. North looked back and let out a big hefty sigh.

"I do."

"You do...?" Jack asks, feeling betrayed for some reason. North

nodded quietly and started to walk towards the three season spirits. Merida was about to get defensive when Hic placed a hand on her shoulder, shaking her head at her thought. Once North was near he stopped, then turned back to the other four.

"Merida, Rapunzel, Hiccup, and Jack have many things in common. One being that they are of the same kind of spirit, that kind being a Seasonal Spirit. Though they may not share the same personality or powers, they share something very little Spirits in our world do." he glanced at Jack, mentally asking him to understand and be calm about what he was going to say next. Jack saw the look in the man's eyes, and looked like he wasn't ready for it. "They share a past."

"A past?" Bunny inquired for everyone. "What do you mean? Like they shared the same life or something?"

"No, nothing like that. More like... they've met before."

"We've _met _before?" Merida sneered, shooting a glare at Jack's general direction. "That must've been one big pain to handle."

"Must've...?" Jack whispered and stood, walking a bit. "Must have... meaning what?"

Merida opened her mouth for a remark but North raised a hand to quiet her. "It means, Jack, that the four of you shared a past and met each other before but... just like what happened to you, they do not remember any of it."

"They what?!" Jack suddenly looked devastated. He honestly didn't know what to do by now but just be filled with surprise.

"Jack didn't know they lived. Jack was there when they were held a funeral. He... didn't know and he was made to believe they were truly gone. So he didn't come looking for them." North added silently, only for the sake of filling everyone in on the matter. Merida looked like she didn't care and Hiccup let out a small sigh, almost guilty. He glanced over to his side and to Rapunzel, who looked and felt just as bad as he did. Her gaze left the autumn spirit and was laid towards Jack, who looked like he was about to explode. The white haired boy quietly walked to the three and stopped, close enough for him and close enough to not anger the threatening redhead.

"Tell me... please tell me..." his voice was cracking as he says this. "Please tell me you remember..." he sounded as if he was begging for them to answer. Jack knew the truth about it but at the same time didn't want to believe it. He knows but he didn't want to know.

Rapunzel watched the faces on her two companions. Merida turned away, choosing not to acknowledge the question at hand. Hiccup didn't seem like he wanted to be the one to throw some sense into Jack, since he knew too that saying it would hurt him. So it was up to her.

"I'm sorry Jack..." she mumbled, clutching still to the sleeve of Hiccup's shirt. "But we don't."

Jack bit his lower lip, nodding in acceptance. It hurt a lot, but he accepted it because this was reality. And even if it may not go with the way he wanted, it was the truth. He couldn't escape from the truth. Rapunzel sighed, feeling bad about it. She took a tiny step away from Hiccup and a bit closer to Jack. He saw that she wasn't looking exactly at him, more at his injuries. She looked concerned.

"Does it... still hurt?" she quietly asks which prompted to Jack touching the wound again. He knew right after that that it was a very bad idea because it stung with his touch and the pain started up once again.

"Aggh... uh... no?" he tried not to worry her but it was too obvious to hide.

"We should probably treat that." she told him and looked over at Bunny and Tooth. They nodded in understanding, rushing off to get some things. After only a while Bunny returned with a small stool and Tooth came back with another glass of water and a dry cloth. Placing the stool down Rapunzel had Jack sit and once he did, began wetting her hands with the water. Once they were soaked she placed the wet hand on his wounds, making him wince. Tooth patted his white head to calm him down, which helped. He ended up just staring at her, while Rapunzel used the dry towel to gently pap the damp places. Hiccup smiled, glad that she was helping. Merida rolled her eyes at this, but spoke up.

"So the big guy says we used to be... I don't know... 'friends'?" she questioned, arms still crossed and her asking was apparently for Jack. The frost boy looked at her, lips pursed slightly.

"Yeah... that's right."

"And he says we were like you, having no memories of who we were in the past?" Hiccup added and Jack just nodded to the query. The brunette and redhead turned to each other, both with the same thought in mind. "Then if that's the case, how come you know who we are and we don't?"

"Oh. Because I got my memories back from my teeth." the utter confusion on all three's faces appeared together in unison.

"Your _teeth_?" Merida was the one who questioned it though.

"Yeah, myâ€" his eyes suddenly widened and they shined with realization. He sat up while Rapunzel was still treating his burn. Doing so left a streak of Aloe Vera across his face. He wiped it off with the sleeve of his hoodie and continued to turn to Toothiana. "Teeth!"

"Uh." feeling a tad bit uncomfortable, Tooth and the other Guardians already knew where all of this was going.

"Tooth! You got to give them their teeth! You have to give them their memories back!" Jack told her, almost shouting. His hands firmly gripped her feathered shoulders and he shook her gently. She saw his eyes gleam with the belief that things could go back the way he wanted it to be.

"Jack... I'd love to do that. But the thing is... you have to ask for their consent first. Whether or not they want their memories."

"Ask them?" he turned quickly and back to the three, who remained silent still. "Please tell me at least you guys _want _to know who you are and who you used to be."

"Of course we do. Who wouldn't want to know who they were before being a Spirit?" Merida answered, huffing a piece of hair from her face as she did.

"It's just that... when we talked about it we kind of... well... we decided that..." Rapunzel fumbled, tugging a lock of her hair, trying to make sense with her sentence. In the end, she decided to just past it on. "Hiccup...?"

"We agreed we'd earn them." the autumn spirit said simply. The rest looked at each other, each a different look on their faces.

"Earn?"

"I'm not the patient type but I'm gonna have to do something big if I ever want my memories back." Merida told them, her hair flaring once again but only for a split second. It was to show how determined about it she truly was.

"I don't understand... Hiccup?" again the clear explanations had to be made by the dragon boy. Hiccup didn't look too bothered about it though.

"Listen, what we're trying to say is that we promised each other, and the Man in the Moon, that we'd prove to him we deserved to learn about our past and how we came to be. Which meant we had to do something quite grand that deserved some kind of recognition." he informed with everyone nodding in understanding. Well, almost everyone, that is.

"You mean what? A prize?" Jack asked, summing it up as he did.

Hiccup tilted his head left and right, pursing his lips. "More or less."

"But... you have the free chance now." he pointed out. "Why won't you take it?"

"Let me answer that question with a question of my own." the summer spirit suddenly said, stepping towards Jack again. Instinctively he reached for his staff with his foot, lifting it up quickly so he was holding it now. Merida rolled her eyes and raised the end of her bow up to almost touch Jack's bruised chin. "Did you get yours with a free chance?"

"Me? Well... I... uhm... no, I didn't." he finally said.

Merida nodded, an accomplished and smug look plastered on her face. "Then I rest my case." Afterwards, she moved her weapon away from his face and walked back to her previous position.

"Jack, I think you got to respect their choices." Bunnymund voiced, sauntering towards Jack. "I know you're upset, we all know. But I think its better if you just..." he exhaled. "...let it go."

Jack glanced at him, the expression on his face meant to show how he was burdening the heavy heart he had. "It's just a little hard to."

~!~

Meanwhile, somewhere miles away from the North Pole, a tall shadowed figure walks with precise movement in a dark room with no light at all but the one coming from a large crystal ball sitting on a stand in the center. The crystal ball features those at the Pole, talking it out and discussing about the three. Pitch Black's gray hands hover around the ball for a moment until he touches it lightly and it immediately focuses on the winter spirit.

With an evil looking smile, he says. "Ah, Jack Frost. It's been such a long time since I've seen you this upset. Why, and this time for such an entirely different reason."

He walks around, circling the item with his hands behind his back as he continues. "To be haunted with the pain of one of the simplest yet most complicated things is much a burden." He stops, yellow eyes shining with malevolence. Looking out the only window there is nothing but darkness out there as well. "You make my planning for revenge much easier Jack. Much, much easier."

He turns around, facing the shining white ball once again. He waves his hand over it as the screen shifts its focus at the people it was looking over at. "I was going to make this plan up to your kind of level, but with this turn of events and your little 'scene', it has convinced me otherwise." The focus on the crystal redirected from the Guardians and then to the three newcomers.

"I'm going to take away the things you hold most dear to your cold little heart." changing its view from Merida, Hiccup, and then Rapunzel, Pitch's smile ascends to a malicious smirk. "I will break them in the worst possible way thinkable."

He looks up and away from the object, this time his attention towards something else occupying the dark room. Two giants blocks of ice stand on top of two separate pedestals, keeping both frozen in the right temperature. The one on the left kept a large black bear with many lethal injuries on it while the one on the right was a woman in a red robed dress. Pitch walk over to both frozen objects and places a hand on the one on his right. Nightmare Sand crawl out of the sleeve of his coat and start surrounding the ice that held the woman. Slowly it encircled it and as it did, began chipping and melting the ices away bit by bit. Pitch watched with a grin as the woman is thawed out of the ice and is left to fall right into his arms. Holding her properly, he steps out of the room and into another to prepare.

"And I know just the way to start it off." he says as the crystal ball's image fades to see over the Tooth Palace.

~!~

Toothiana sighs and leans her cheek on her hand, still flying. She listened attentively to the conversation the four young ones were sharing. It truly was a puzzling thing to work out, but in the same way it wasn't. She was just worried about Jack and how he was feeling about it. Tooth remembers those good moments she shared with him where they'd end up talking to each other about their past and their memories and just generally having a good time. He never told her about these three though, and she wondered why. She admits that at the beginning she may have developed a crush on the winter spirit, but in the end it was just a crush that never really evolved into something important. Now, they treat each other like siblings and she was the older sister in that sort of relationship. So, as an older sister figure, Tooth was uneasy with Jack being so troubled like this.

She was abruptly pulled out of her thoughts by her fairies chirping urgently at her. She looked at each and every one of them, taking the time to listen to what they wanted to tell her. Afterwards, her purple eyes widened. "Oh no."

Everyone else paused their discussion and turned to the floating Guardian to see what was up. "What is it Tooth?" Bunny was the one to ask.

She spun in her place in the air and her face held a devastated look. "The fairies. Something's happening at the Tooth Palace again." she informed them, struck by the sudden dilemma. The four Guardians widened their eyes just the same and exchanged knowing looks.

"Pitch?" Jack asked.

"Most likely." North answered and they placed a determined look on their faces. And as always, for now that is, the other three were completely left out of it.

"Pitch? As in Pitch Black?" Merida questioned and Sandy nodded to her. His facial expressions and hand movements started up and the two looked like they were sharing an actual and normal conversation. Merida nodded at everything he's trying to say, almost like she was listening to him talk. "Ah, so he's a bad guy you once fought. I understand."

"How did you...?" Bunny was about to ask but when he saw that Sandy shook his head to him he decided not to question it anymore.

"The Bogeyman huh..." Rapunzel murmured, staring at the ground and thinking deeply. Hiccup shrugged.

"Never liked the guy, but I haven't met him yet. I still don't like him."

"You don't need to meet him to know what he's like. All you need to know is that he chose the wrong move messing with my fairies again. This time, he's not getting off with _just _a punch and a missing tooth anymore." Tooth scowled, now angry. Without another word she flew off and out of the always open window, her small fairies tagging along. As always, Baby Tooth remained with Jack, only silently wishing Tooth well.

"We cannot let Pitch do what he did before. We must head to the Tooth Palace immediately! Prepare the sleigh!" North announced, clapping loudly to order the other Yetis. Bunny's ears twitched at the thought of riding on that death trap once again. Sandy looked ecstatic.

"If you don't mind, North, I'm going to go ahead and help Toothiana." Hiccup told the big man, already hopping on top of Toothless. "I think she might need some earlier back-up." Bunnymund was about to suggest to go with him but once he processed the idea of riding on top of something that actually had a mind of its own and could very well flip him off if it wanted to, he decided to stay quiet.

"I'm coming with you, Hic." Merida spoke up, tagging along as she jumped on top of Toothless with him. Hiccup nodded at her then looked at Rapunzel, to see if she wanted to come as well.

"Nah, I think I'll stay. It's not every day you get to ride on the legendary sleigh of _the _Santa Claus! I'll meet up with you guys there." she happily told them, and they both nodded. After Hiccup had set himself up, the dragon backed a bit before launching into the air and out the window. North clapped his hands again and gestured the rest towards the basement where the sleigh was at.

Once they were down, Rapunzel beamed in wonder as the vehicle emerged out of the room it was being kept in. Elves and Yetis were scrambling all over the place, making quick adjustments to the carriage and making sure the horseshoes were nailed in right on the hooves of the reindeer. North grinned, a large hand placed on the smaller girl's shoulder. "Amazing isn't it?"

"No duh!" she exclaimed. Jack watched her excitedly climb into the carriage, sitting beside Sandy who had got in the first chance he had. He looked a lot happier than he did just moments ago. And as Bunny was being dragged in by the large man, he noticed the look on the boy's face, and he knew what kind of look that was. It was a look of confidence and he knew right away what the confidence was for and he was not going to let that happen.

A few seconds of sledding through the ice caves and going through loops had already gone by, and Rapunzel had already been having the time of her life. She saw the ramp and would've squealed even louder if it wasn't already her loudest. Right when they took off, she stood up, her hair flowing into the air. Jack noticed her feet had very slightly parted from the ground and thought that she might actually fall off. Confidence still lingering, he was about to help her hold on by letting her hold on to him but before he could make a move, Rapunzel's hand was suddenly taken in by Bunny's furry paw. Both season spirits turned to look at him.

The Guardian looked like he was going to throw up on everything as he clutched onto the side of the carriage. "Ryllis! I think I'm gonnaâ€" he covered his mouth right before he could finish his sentence, and Rapunzel ceased standing to sit beside him.

"Bunny I know you get sick easily but you look horrible!"

"I was hoping you were going to be a little less straight forward." and for the rest of the short trip before North had thrown the snow globe portal, Rapunzel focused on keeping Bunnymund okay. Jack

frowned and sat down, leaning his head on the palm of his hand while he watched the two spirits interact. Sandy, with his hands still up while he feels the wind in his sand, quietly turned to Jack and smiled knowingly.

Seconds later they've arrived at the Tooth Palace. What the Guardians had expected as a thousand Nightmares flying all over the place was nothing more than nothing. Jack and Sandy had already been in a fighting position when they emerged out of the portal, but had put on looks of surprise when they looked around the place. North unnervingly led them to the core of the Tooth Palace, where all of the tiny fairies were apparently gathered at. At the gazebo-looking core, Toothiana was busily talking to her fairies while Hiccup, Merida, and Toothless were behind her, attentively listening. Once the sleigh had landed, everyone hopped off and hurried over to them.

"What happened? Where's Pitch and the Nightmares?" Bunny asked and Merida swirled her head to face them.

"Not here. When we came there was nothing. Nothing but all these little fairies tweeting around saying something I don't know." she shrugged, a fisted hand on her hip and her other holding unto her bow. Sandy formed a figure of her glowing hand over his head and Merida shook her head, telling him she can't do that here or something.

"Then what are the fairies so unnerved about then?" Jack asked, nearing Tooth while she nodded off to one of the small fairies. The female Guardian frowned in an unsure way.

"No, it's not that Pitch wasn't here. They said he was here. But he left right away after taking these specific sets of teeth." she notified, eyes drooping a bit. Jack saw the uneasy look she had put on.

"Tooth?" he quietly asked. Then a question popped into his mind. "You said specific sets of teeth, right? Whose teeth were they?"

She sighed. "That's the thing. It's whose teeth he took that's bothering me."

"Whose was it?" Bunny asked.

"It's Rapunzel, Merida, and Hiccup's teeth. He took their memories." she finally said, guilt clear in her voice. Hiccup and Rapunzel widen their eyes in shock; Merida shared the same reaction for a second before she started to angrily growl under her breath. Jack began filling his mind with anger as well.

"He took WHAT?!" Merida roared and for a moment, her whole physique had turned into a flame for a second. Everyone who saw simply thought of it as nothing but their imagination. Jack seethes then looks over to the girl.

"This enough of a challenge to earn your memories?" he asked. The summer spirit cracked her knuckles.

"What do you think?"

8. Black Heart

"You know what? I say we march over to Pitch and beat him up! I had enough of this cat and mouse game. It's time we hit him head on!" Bunny suggested, already bringing his boomerangs out.

"I'm up for it." both Jack and Merida said in unison, but the girl didn't glare at the boy for it.

"No, we shouldn't do that." Hiccup spoke up, looking at the ground with a hand to his chin while he began thinking.

"Hiccup is right. We can't just come marching towards Pitch unprepared. No, we need to get ready for this." North told them and everyone nodded with understanding.

"If I may say something," the brunette suddenly said, "I've thought up of another plan of action."

>Rapunzel let out a breath and a smile. "And out comes the logical Hiccup." Hiccup crossed his arms, slightly embarrassed for her to say that in front of everyone.<p>

"Well, uhm, I suggest we gather information. I know you all know who Pitch is and have encountered him before but I bet there are things, vital things that we don't know about him yet. It's better to know what we're up against than just charging in without a plan." he told them and North clapped his hands loudly with agreement.

"That is excellent idea! Well done, Hiccup, for thinking it up!" the big man complimented and the boy simply nodded in acknowledgement. "Now, we shall go forward with Hiccup's plan. As he says, we will gather more information about Pitch than what we know now."

"Splitting up is the best course of action, right?" Rapunzel said then looked over to Hiccup to see if it was a plausible idea. He nodded at her and she smiles in accomplishment.

"Then if that is the case, we go by pairs! The first place to look is Pitch's Lair of course. I don't know if he's still there or not but it's still a risky job. The pair assigned to that is Jack and Tooth." the two mentioned turned to each other and nodded. "Now if anything happens, make sure you call us or signal us in any way you can, alright?"

"Got it."

"Hiccup and Sandy, I'll pair you two up. I want you to search the night skies to see if there's any sign of his nightmares going about." Sandy stared at his hand and all the sand it was made out of; the images of his once death from before haunts his mind. >Hiccup notices the strained look on his face. "Understood."<p>

"Bunny and Merida go search The Woods. Nature once told me there was a certain part of the place that was almost always dark and mysterious. Something tells me that's not a coincidence of some sort." he informs the two, with Merida already tying her wild hair into a pony tail.

"Alright then. Where is this, 'The Woods' exactly?" she asked, a band in her mouth while she gathered her hair up.

"It's close to my Kingdom and don't worry. Just like my home it isn't that hard to miss." the autumn spirit told them and they nodded.

"So that means I'm with you?" Rapunzel perked up, eyes brimming with excitement towards the white bearded man. North grinned and patted her small little blonde head.

"Yes, my dear. We will go back to the Pole for more researching. I have a library with everything I know about every Spirit out here. Maybe we can find something interesting." he stated. "Are you a fan of reading?"

"Are you kidding me?" she chimed happily and skipped beside the big man and looped her arm around his, almost looking like a little girl.

"We meet back at the Pole in a few, alright?" Bunnymund told them, and they all agreed. "Good then. Come on Kegan. I hope you like underground surfing."

"I have a feeling this is gonna be interesting." she smirked, wrapping her bow around her body as she stands beside her partner for the Intel Mission.

Before Bunny taps the ground for the hole to appear, he looks up and directs his attention to North. "Look after Ryllis, alright?"

"Of course." and with that, the hole appeared in front of them as the giant rabbit dove down head first. Merida gave a salute to her two friends and hopped in with a gleeful cry as the entrance disappears after her.

"We should be heading on our way too, Sandy." Hiccup announced to his own partner while the little man nodded in agreement. He turns towards Toothless but stops from it to go walk towards Rapunzel, placing a hand on her shoulder. "Be careful."

"What is it with you guys? It's not like I'm on Pitch's death list or something." the girl shrugged and Hiccup just sighed.

"You never know. And you know we're just worried about you."

"Well you should stop and worry about yourselves. Especially you Hiccup." she poked his chest suggestively and puffed up her cheeks. Hic looks away in embarrassment, pats her small blonde head before heading to Toothless and beside Sandy, who was already riding on his own sand version of a different kind of dragon. When the boy was done adjusting his foot, the two flew off to the sky and was soon out of sight.

"To Pitch's lair, Jack?" Tooth asked bringing out her wings as her feet lift off of the ground. Jack watched as Baby Tooth flew around his head then towards Tooth to sit on her shoulder with a look of determination. Calling out the wind, he too lifted off the ground to float beside Toothiana. They both turned to look at the remaining pair.

"Be safe you two." North warns them; a bit regretful of the great danger he has put the pair in. They mutter a 'yeah' as Jack gazes towards the other girl. Rapunzel notices this as well as how Jack was about to open his mouth to say something to her. Immediately and before he can, she raises her finger up.

"Don't." she plainly says, knowing very well that he'd ask and or tell her to be careful or to watch herself. Jack stares for a while and smiles, knowing she'll be fine. He looks back to Tooth to nod and they both fly off to their assigned destination.
>North let out a big sigh, hands on hips and all. Rapunzel watches, takes note, and does the same action with a playful giggle. They exchange happy expressions before heading back to the sleigh.<p>

~!~

>Jack and Tooth flew over Jamie's hometown. They remembered this was the place they last saw Pitch disappear to. That night held one of the biggest battles in Guardian History and all was well when it had finally been settled. They had always wondered what happened to the man after that. They saw him being dragged back into his lair by his own nightmares. At that moment, all five guardians had felt bad for the guy.<p>

"Gee, it's been a long while since we've been near Pitch's lair." Tooth commented, right beside Jack as they travelled. The frost boy had occupied his mind about a lot of things, mostly about his three friends and wondering what he's supposed to do about it, while the rest of his brain was either fogged up or focusing on the mission they had in mind.

"Yeah. It has hasn't itâ€" speaking of the mission, a very crucial factor regarding it in particular flashes in Jack's mind, making him stop in mid-air, mouth drawn into a thin line. This resulted in Tooth flying way ahead. She stopped right away though to see what her partner was up to.

"Jack?"

"Tooth, do you remember the last time we saw Pitch."

"Of course. We saw him being dragged down his lair by his own Nightmares." she told him, flying back to get closer.

Jack remained tight lipped though. "And?"

"And? Well, and then he..." realization struck her like a brick dropping from the sky and unto her head. She met her face with the palm of her hand, grunting loudly as she felt rather embarrassed.
"...disappeared along with the entrance."

"Well what now? We're assigned to Pitch's lair but how are we even going to get there?" Jack asked, a hand in his hoodie pocket as he scans the forest they were in.

"Honestly, I'm more concerned at whether or not the lair is still there." Tooth sighed, looking around with Jack. Baby Tooth fluttered around Tooth's head, grabbing her attention. The human-hummingbird hybrid watched as her small follower chirped for a few seconds before diving down near the ground. "Baby Tooth?"

The two Guardians look at each other, and then hurried off to follow the little creature to see what she was up to. Baby Tooth was circling a certain area, and Jack dropped to the ground and crouched to see what it was. "Baby what's wrong?"

She lively chirped, pointing at that certain area. Jack glanced over to Toothiana to see if she could provide a translation. "She says something about the entrance to the lair but I don't see anything."

Taking his staff he taps it on the ground and the sound of not earth but wood was heard. Widening their eyes, Jack stands up straight and takes his staff in both hands and forcefully plunges it to the hard earth. It creaks and it cracks, revealing a hidden entranceway while the moss and grass covered wood fell through and was heard landing with a clunk. Jack, Tooth, and Baby peek over only to see nothing else but darkness.

"I guess we found our lair." the white haired boy smiled at the girl and she smiled back. He stands and jumps down, a gust of wind following him in.

"Good job, girl." Toothiana praised and petted her small companion, who chirped with gladness and together they followed suit. The tunnel was dark and quiet; it went on forever in her perspective. She finally reached the end of it, and the place turned out bigger than she had expected. The place even had enough light to be able to look around.

Jack stood there; blankly looking around the place as he sourly remembers his past experiences around it. Tooth hovered over to stand beside him, twisting her head around. "It doesn't seem like anyone's here. We should split up." she told him, to which Jack nodded to. With Baby Tooth still tagging along, she flew off cautiously and disappeared into another entrance.

The white haired boy had had his eyes follow his female companion, and once she had gone he let out a deep shuddering breath. Clutching his staff tightly in his grip, he began to walk. His feet make a soft bare sound on the ground as he remembered the time he had to run around the place, chasing Pitch and failing. The boy was in the man's domain, it was highly likely he wasn't going to catch him anyway. Jack only thought about it now.

As he walked, his vision started to fog up a bit and he had to rub his eyes to get it clear but to no such avail. Soon it wasn't just his eyesight but his head started to throb achingly. Jack placed a hand over his forehead, he was burning up. 'A fever in the middle of this? Great.' But after a short while, it began haunting him with much clearer sense. He was a Guardian. Guardians don't get fevers, don't they? And besides, he's a living, breathing embodiment of winter. He doesn't get colds and a fever is sort of related to a cold, right? What's going on?

"Ah Jack." the sudden voice speaking up startled him, making him turn around with his staff at the ready. His eyes widened and despite his blurry vision, he knew exactly who it was. "So good to see you well and alive."

"Pitch." he spat the name out in disgust as he did.

"How are you? How are the Guardians? It's been such a long time."

"Can it Black!" Jack suddenly shouted, looking and sounding threatening. "Where are they."

"Where is what?" Pitch asked, walking around and talking like this was a casual conversation they were having.

"You know what I mean." the boy scowled, stepping in the opposite direction the black haired man was going. "Where are the teeth?!"

"Teeth? Teeth of whom?" the Bogeyman asked once again, all innocent like. Once he saw that Jack was not amused, he answered his own question. "Ah, yes. The teeth of your three little friends. Tell me Jack, how does it feel like to be unknown to them?"

"Shut up."

"How does it feel to be forgotten?"

"I said SHUT UP!" hitting a nerve, Jack strikes, staff raised upwards and ready to swing Pitch at the side as it glowed a powerful light blue.

~!~

Toothiana and Baby Tooth hurried as quietly as they could in the tunnel they found themselves in. Though being part-hummingbird, the action was a little harder to do. Nevertheless, the pair was determined to stay alert and at the same time keep their eyes open for anything suspicious or anything that held any form of clue as to where he could be or what he could be planning. The tunnel was long and followed only one way until finally reaching an end. The door was wooden and old and looked like it was about to break with just a touch. Baby Tooth neared and tapped it with her small foot to check. It didn't seem to budge.

The two glanced at each other, both taking one deep breath before coming through the door. It creaked with an eerie sound when it opened, and once they entered dust sprayed them in the face as if it were the welcoming committee. They both coughed as Tooth waved her hand in the air, fanning away the dust and blinking many a times to clear her vision.

The room was small. Nothing but a long table and countless pieces of papers in various conditions were contained inside of it. The papers piled the floors and some were pinned to the wall. The room was dim and you wouldn't be able to see too much from it. The only light came from the medium sized window on the side wall with the Moon overlooking the room and the two who were scurrying around. The sun must've set a few minutes ago.

"Alright, we need light BT. You think there are any candles here?" Tooth asked, rummaging through the desk for anything that can be used for light. Baby Tooth flew around to check every other inch of the room and eventually found a drawer. Tapping it with her long beak it

caught the Guardian's attention. "Oh yeah, drawer!" she pulled at the handle, opening it and releasing some moths to their freedom. Inside were a candlestick and a single match. Propping it on the table and scratching the match head on the desk she lit the candle up, bringing luminescence into the room. Everything was clearer now, and so were the papers and pictures surrounding her.

The pictures made her wide eyed and Baby Tooth dropped to the desk.

"Oh my god." she muttered, bringing her wings out as she began scanning the whole room and each paper it held. With each one she read she let out a different version of her shock. And everything came to a stop at one single picture that summed it all up.

"This is not what we were looking for but it sure is something." Toothiana mumbled still quite dazed.

All of a sudden the ground shook, snapping both girls from their concentrated thinking. They twist around to check if anyone was there. No one.

This time it wasn't just the ground but everything just shook and vibrated, rubble already falling from the ceiling. Faint screaming and yelling could be heard from afar and a second after each yell the room shook again and cracks appeared on the walls.

"We gotta go." Toothiana informed her companion, who got up and sat on the Guardian's shoulder, still trying to compose herself. The place shook violently once again and the ceiling threatened to collapse over their heads. With quick reflexes Tooth grabbed the picture on the wall and left immediately, the ceiling breaking and falling down to the fully destroy the room they were just in. Swiftly she flew down the tunnel again, avoiding rocks and every possible danger. Once they were out and into the much larger room, they saw the source of the wreckage.

Jack was violently swinging his glowing frosted staff around, angrily shouting and attacking each and every pillar that held the whole place up. It looked like he was fighting, but there was no sign of anyone he had to fight. Tooth flew over towards him.

"Jack! What are you doing?!" she blurted out, worried for him and their current situation. Jack twisted his head towards her, eyes glaring and angry. He raised his staff again and stepped in to strike her, and would've hit her dead on the head if she didn't dodge in time. "Jack?!"

"I SAID SHUT UP!" he shouted, continuing his attacks while Toothiana evaded. She was confused and afraid at the same time. Why is he doing this? "DON'T YOU DARE TALK ABOUT THEM LIKE THAT IN FRONT OF ME!"

"What are you talking about?!" Tooth asked, desperately trying to make sure she wouldn't get hit by Jack's weapon or the falling rocks.

"I WON'T LET YOU HURT THEM!" with a glowing hand, Jack went in and punched Tooth straight in the nose. The girl staggered a bit before coming to a stop and floating there, hands to her nose.

"A-ah." she touched it lightly and saw that he gave her a nosebleed. Looking up, he saw Jack smirk a little.

"You react like a girl."

And with a fisted hand, Tooth punched him right in the jaw. He toppled right over and fell to his back, dropping his staff to the ground as well. The female Guardian waved her hand, shaking the pain away from it. "I'm gonna have to draw the line there."

Another quake appeared and with instinct Tooth grabbed the unconscious Jack and his staff and began flying as fast as she could out the entrance. With dirt falling on her head as she went up the previous entrance, she closed her eyes and gasped for air as soon as she was out into the open. She dropped Jack unto the ground together with his staff and later fell unto her back with Baby Tooth doing the same. They both breathed heavily until facing each other. "Well that was something."

Afterwards she sat up, brushing the dirt from her feathers and began fixing herself. "I wonder what was up with Jack back then. Agh, I'm gonna have to have Rapunzel check on my nose. I think its broken." she sighed and saw Baby Tooth holding on to the picture she managed to save before that room was destroyed. "Thank god we manage to save this one." she took it from the little hummingbird and held it to her face, placing it over the moonlight.

It was a family picture of three. A beautiful woman with long blonde hair stood beside a man with a striking resemblance to Pitch, but who looked more humane than he is now.

Both adult's hands were placed on the shoulders of a young boy whose smile make it look like nothing bad could have ever happened.

9. When You Know You're Afraid

Somewhere else the sun had already set and the night had come to take over the role. The Full Moon came up and looked like it was watching over every little thing that happened in these wee hours. In that somewhere, stealthily riding the skies on two very different creatures, Hiccup and Sandy were keeping an eye out for any sign of Nightmares that would appear around and at the same time doing the initial job of the Sandman.

Dream Sand flowed through the air like vines or a river of water, slowly finding their way into the rooms of children and giving them beautiful dreams so they would be assured of a good night's sleep. Sandy was forming sand after sand of creatures the kids would manage to dream up. Creatures such as manta rays, dinosaurs, elephants, giant butterflies, and some were even dragons.

Hiccup admired his partner's work, watching the creatures fly by with much awe. After a while he turned to him. "What does it feel like, making children happy like this?"

The Guardian paused to look at him, blankly staring before smiling and making words appear in sand over his head. _'It feels great.'_

"Like it brightens your day?"

'Like it fills up my heart.' The small man then formed the shape of a heart with his hands over his chest.

"Hm." Hiccup looked away, still a smile on his face as he pats Toothless' head. "I guess that's one of the perks of being a Guardian, huh."

'It is. And soon enough, you're going to feel the same way. Don't worry, Hiccup.' Sandy reassured, moving close to pat the young man on the back. Hiccup silently thanked him, and as they continued to fly through the night, silence occurred until he finally spoke up again.

"So, have you met Pitch before?" he asked, and Sandy nodded profusely. "I assume that something big happened then."

'Oh yes. It happened ten months ago, and he threatened to take over the world with fear and darkness.' the Guardian explained, the words still forming for Hiccup to understand. The brunet rubbed his chin, deep in thought.

"Do you have some sort of... memorabilia or anything from that event ten months ago?" Sandy looked away and searched for a pocket that looked like it wasn't there but turned out to be there after all. He brought out a small glass bottle filled with black dream sand. He handed it over to the other spirit who held it gently in his hands.

'I managed to get some Nightmare Sand before Pitch disappeared into his lair the last time I saw him. I just thought we might need it someday.'

"Well you thought right." he brushed his finger against its clear glass, squinting as the black sand flowed around its container. He placed two fingers at the ready on its cap. "May I?"

'Hm... I don't know.' Sandy looked unsure whether he can just let the sand out. What if the chance it gets out of its container it'd disappear right away?

"Don't worry. I'll make sure you can still keep it. I have... ways." he smiled in reassurance and Sandy couldn't help but nod, allowing him to. Hiccup let go of his hold on Toothless, but they both still managed to stay soaring. He very carefully took the cap off, and the sand immediately flowed out. With a swift flick of his wrist, a refreshing gust of wind suddenly appeared and made the black sand flow with it as it circled the orange-eyed boy. Sandy watched as Hiccup closed his eyes, the sand surrounding him still as he concentrated.

Images and moments in that previous battle with Pitch appeared in his mind, rushing memories in like a coursing river.

~!~

_"The Big Four all in one place. I'm a little star-struck. Did you like my show on the globe, North? Got you all together, didn't

I?"_

_i p i _

"Pitch! You have got thirty seconds to return my fairies!"

Tooth darts after Pitch, but he escapes into the shadows.

"Or what? You'll stick a quarter under my pillow?"

__i p i __

"Why are you doing this?"

"Maybe I want what you have. To be believed in".

Jack takes this in, almost in understanding. Pitch moves along the walls and shadows of the chamber.

"Maybe I'm tired of hiding under beds."

"Maybe that's where you belong!"

"Ah, go suck an egg, rabbit."

__i p i __

"Hang on, is that... Jack Frost?" he laughs. "Since when are you all so chummy?"

"We're not."

_"Oh, good." Jack sees Pitch standing in the middle of a column.

_

"A neutral party. Then I'm just going to ignore you. But, you must be used to that by now."

__i p i __

"Oh, the Dark Ages."

More images of people and children cowering in fear of Pitch Black, also known as the Bogeyman.

"Everyone frightened. Miserable. Such happy times for me. Oh, the power I wielded!"

__i p i __

"What's going on?"

"They, they don't believe in me anymore." Tooth mumbles, quiet and devastated.

"Didn't they tell you, Jack? It's great being a Guardianâ€"but there's a catch. If enough kids stop believing, everything your friends protectâ€"wonder, hopes, and dreamsâ€"it all goes away. And little by little, so do they."

Jack widens his eyes in realization, knowing now how big Pitch's plan is.

"No Christmas, or Easter, or little fairies that come in the night. There will be nothing. But fear and darkness and me! It's your turn not to be believed in!"

__;p;__

A strand of Nightmare Sand twirls in the air, and Pitch twists it with his fingers, turning it into a crude image of Sandy.

"Fine, have your last hurrah. For tomorrow, all your pathetic scrambling will be for nothing."

And he crushes the image with his fist.

__;p;__

"You know, for a 'neutral party' you spend an awful lot of time with those weirdos. This isn't your fight, Jack."

The winter spirit's eyes narrow down. He holds out his staff, ready to strike.

"You made it my fight when you stole those teeth."

Pitch regards him curiously.

"Teeth? Why do you care about the teeth?"

__;p;__

Pitch shakes off a crash, trying to back up as Sandy touches down and moves toward him, Jack right behind him. Pitch cowers in fear as they come near.

"Okay, easy! You can't blame me for trying, Sandy. You don't know what it's like to be weak and hated. It was stupid of me to mess with your dreams. So I'll tell you whatâ€""_

Pitch stops cowering and stands up.

"You can have 'em back."

A Nightmare shoots up through a storm drain as several others gather in the alley behind him.

__;p;__

Sandy is on a giant sand cloud, two whips of sand in both hands as he attacks all the oncoming Nightmares towards him. Pitch rises from behind a group of Nightmares, standing on their collected backs. He stretches his arms as an arrow of Nightmare Sand forms behind him.

"We gotta help Sandy!" Jack screams as he and the others hurry towards their friend on a sleigh.

_Pitch takes aim and releases the arrow. It flies through the air and

into Sandy's back, exploding on impact._

The Guardians look on, horrified. Jack is the first to react. "Nooo!"

_He leaps ahead of the sleigh and flies toward Sandy.

_

"Jack!"

Sandy feels the shock and turns around very slowly, heavy breathing but without the sound. A patch of blackness starts to slowly spread across his body starting from his back.

_Pitch laughs as he and Sandy lock eyes. _

"Don't fight the fear, little man." Pitch continues with a smirk. The Guardians hurry up, continuing to speed towards their friend in trouble. Nightmares begin colliding with the sleigh, blocking their path. Pitch relishes his moment of triumph. "I'd say sweet dreams, but there aren't any left."

Sandy, his face an expression of terror, falls to his knees as his golden sand cloud begins to blacken as well. Jack continues on, still trying to reach his friend as fast as he can.

Sandy slowly stands, now accepting his fate. He closes his eyes and he is engulfed by the writhing blackness of the Nightmare Sand.

"Sandy..." North whispers, his two other companions feeling just the same.

"No..." Jack mutters, wide eyed. He bites his lip and grips his staff tighter. "NOOOOOO!"

~!~

Hiccup screams suddenly, eyes widened and filled with horror. He was breathing heavily and he looked so pale it was like he would faint any minute now. Right at his scream he had formed his hands into tight fists, gripping the glass bottle suddenly and had resulted in Hic crushing the container. Not only that but he lost his focus on the wind, and it had suddenly disappeared. If not for the fact that Toothless could manipulate the wind as well the pair would've been falling by now. Sandy furrowed his eyebrows, worried.

He bent over to get a good look at the boy's lowered face and words of sand appeared in front of him once again. _'Are you alright?'_

"I-I'm... I'm fine Sandy. Just... a little taken back..." Hiccup muttered, still quite out of breath. He looked at the probably blond haired man then at his fisted hand. Slowly he opened it up and found himself holding bits and pieces of the once whole glass container. Some of the sharp pieces managed to stick themselves into his skin and his hand began bleeding. "Sorry about the, uh... container. I guess I can't use my ways to get back your sand without a place to put it in." he apologized.

Sandy shook his head, hinting that he's trying to forget about it. He raised his golden hand and pointed towards his palm, still looking at Hiccup with his worried expression. The brunet looked over then at his own hand again. "Ah... this? This is nothing... but I guess 'Punzel should have a look at it."

'What did you see?' now a question mark appears over the little man's head. Hiccup sighed, brushing out his hair with his uninjured hand.

"A lot of things." he first says, "That guy... Pitch Black... he... he seems so familiar. It's like I've met him before."

'But didn't you say you've never met Pitch?'

"I did say that. But... this is a weird feeling Sandy. It's terrifying to think about... but he looks like he doesn't put much of a fight on his own." Hiccup mumbles, turning away for a second before turning back to see if Sandy had anything to say.

The blond little man regards him with a look of caution. _'Do not let your guard down. Pitch has a very dangerous mind. We don't know what he'll come up with.'_

"Don't worry. I won't... I hope." and with that the pair rise up higher into the night sky. Hiccup was still distracted with his thoughts. The images kept popping into his mind each time he blinked, it ached. He sighed. He has a feeling something big is going to happen. Something really big.

~!~

"The Bogeyman can be and is described in many countless ways. He can be whatever one fears the most and keep them from getting a good night's sleep. This nasty monster has been known to terrorize and kidnap misbehaving children. He only appears when the subject is all alone in a darkened room, waiting to pounce as soon as its victim falls into deep sleep. He can hide in the closet, under the bed or in a pile of dirty laundry. The messier the room, the more places he can take cover. The wind, moonlight, and or streetlights could be blamed for the scary, moving shadows appearing about in ones room..."

The long haired blonde read aloud a book that contained its own detailed description of the known 'Bogeyman' which was just a fancy title Humans would call Pitch, but of course everyone already knows that. Rapunzel placed the book down and stared at the one picture on the next page, which depicted what the Humans would think Pitch actually looked like. It was a tall man in a black coat with his face completely covered. His eyes glowed red and his mouth was curled up into a malicious smile. Rapunzel took a deep breath and leaned her head to rest on the palm of her hand.

She was inside a room that looked a lot like a library. Shelves were tall and were filled with countless books of spirits and legends and fairy tales of which written by both Human and Spirit. She watched as her partner came back, boots stomping the wooden floor with each step he took. North carried a large stack of thick books, blocking his field of vision but that didn't serve as any problem to him. He knew the room like the back of his hand, and expertly managed his way to the table Rapunzel was sitting at. He dropped the books, almost

slamming them but Rapunzel didn't flinch. He then scooted over to sit directly in front of her. "Find anything?"

"Just another description of Pitch known for kidnapping kids or something." she effortlessly blew a piece of her golden locks away from her face, making it land back at the top of her head. Her eyes furrowed angrily. "I don't like him."

"Not a lot do, at first. But he's not an entirely bad guy." the big man added, defending his maybe colleague. The girl gave him a look.

"He kidnaps children. What don't you understand from that."

"Rapunzel, he never really kidnaps children. It's just something parents say to their kids to get them to behave. Pitch never stooped that low. Well, not that I know of, at least." North mentions, stroking his beard in a thinking manner. Rapunzel lowers her arms and rests her head on the table.

"Still... he did something bad once and that's it. End of story." is all she manages to say, her eyes drooping in a lazy kind of way. North tilts his head to get her to look back at him.

"I sense that something is the matter." he is proven right when the girl replies with a sigh. "And I sensed right. What is it Rapunzel? The mission not as interesting as you'd hope it would be?"

"No, no, it's nothing like that!" she sits up and tries to get things straight. "Like I said before, I love reading books and learning about things and I know this mission is very critical and important but I'm just wondering..." she pauses and looks at the man who patiently waits for her to continue unsurely. "...why."

"Why what?"

"Why us. Why did the Man in the Moon choose us of all people? There are plenty of Spirits in this world potential enough or strong enough to be a Guardian. Why us? What did we do? And why all three? He could've chosen just one of us. He could've chosen Hiccup, or Merida, or, though I was pretty sure it wouldn't happen, me. Why?" Rapunzel asks seriously, her eyes pleading for him to give her a straight and understandable answer.

The Guardian thinks for a while before answering. "Maybe he chose the three of you because he knew we Guardians may need help against Pitch. Maybe he's stronger now than ever before."

"Is that the only reason why, though?" she speaks up right as he's done with his statement, silencing him. "Is our destiny just having to fight this one guy? Aren't we meant for anything else?"

"You were not just chosen to fight Pitch. You were chosen to protect the children of the world, to teach them new things and to give them what your center calls for." North informs, gesturing to her and then pointing to his chest to emphasize. Rapunzel sighs again.

"My center... Hiccup and Merida kept talking about it all the time when we were together. They were so sure of theirs and I wasn't so

much." she admits holding a thick book in her hands as she flips through the pages without reading the words that were written. North moves his seat closer to the table and places his interlocked hands on the surface of it.

"And what would those centers be?"

"Merida said her center was Bravery and Aspirations... you know, the desire to get things done, that basic stuff. And Hiccup's was Change. I don't know why he chose that but I guess it's his thing?" she answers, trying to remember those often times they'd just sit down and talk about being Guardians. They were such kids back then, not in the literal sense since they were technically over 200 years old already.

"And you?" North asks and Rapunzel doesn't answer for a short while until she finally does.

"Creativity. But... I'm not even sure about that. Is it my center? Does it fit me? What would fruit from such a thing? Does it even matter to kids?" she said with all more questions rushing through her head and each one made it feel like her heart sank deeper and deeper into an abyss.

"Why do you doubt?" North was trying to fix this, to see what problems she was going through and to help her ease out of them.

"I don't know. Maybe I'm just... not ready for this?" Rapunzel sighed and began gathering her long hair into her hands and placing it all over one of her shoulders. "I want this... but I think I'm not ready."

"Hm." the white bearded man nods, almost in understanding. He looks at her and sees that her emerald hues are looking very dull, portraying her doubt in every way possible. He reaches his large hand across the table and opens his palm out to her. Rapunzel looks at him then stares at his hand for just a moment before places both her small hands in his. He covers them up with his other hand and holds them gently. "Maybe not now or maybe not today, but you will be ready and you will know and be sure about your center. And when you do, there might be a time when you'll feel all alone and... lost. But know that you never really are."

She takes in what he says, word by word and remembering it clearly. "How do you know?"

"Because, my dear, it once had happened to me. Back in my... younger days, if I may say." he pats her hands and lets go, leaning back into his chair as he remembers the olden days of when it was his first years as a Guardian. Rapunzel takes back her hands and rests them softly on her lap. She smiles ever so slightly as she watches her partner joyfully tell her a short story of one of his old adventures. He made her feel a lot better now.

But as she listened intently about something relating to his eight reindeers, she recalls a certain subject she's been meaning to ask the big guy. "Oh, uhm. Wait a minute."

"Hm? Yes?" with his arms raised up pretending to hold two of his swords, he cuts his storytelling short to see what's on her

mind.

"Is it alright if I... ask you a question?" the curling of his lips is a sign that it was fine for her to inquire something. She bites her lower lip, not done yet. "...about Jack?"

"Jack you say? What about Jack?"

"Why did he act the way he did when we first met him earlier today? I don't mean to be mean but... is there something wrong with him?" she asks quite innocently.

"Nothing is wrong with him, Jack is fine in the head if that's what you're getting at." he taps the side of his forehead in a gesturing manner. "And, about him acting that way, I cannot say why."

"Why not?" her tone perked up in curiosity.

"It has to be something either he tells you himself, or something you will have to learn on your own together with your other two friends." her shoulders fall back down after just being raised. "I'm sorry."

"No, it's fine. Just wish I could know why now so I'd be able to do something about it." Rapunzel leaned against her chair sighing but with a smile on still.

"You will. Someday. I promise." North places a hand over his heart to swear that he truly is promising her.

"I'll hold you on to that promise." a grin appeared on her face and she began beaming, finally returning to her once bubbly self moments ago before this serious conversation took place. After that they both burst into an array of giggles and chuckles for no apparent reason, probably to just break the gloomy mood that was holding up.

And as they she was starting to feel better, the doors to the room suddenly burst open, and they both stand up and turn to see who would suddenly barge in like that. They see Toothiana struggling to fly across the room whilst carrying an unconscious Jack. Baby Tooth followed and was right beside her, holding in her tiny hands the wrinkled piece of paper they had retrieved.

"Toothiana?! Jack?!" Rapunzel's voice raises seeing the both of them in their current condition. She runs around the table and towards them, helping the female Guardian out with carrying Jack and get her to catch her breath as she did. North hurried right beside the smaller girl.

"What happened? Did Pitch attack?" he asked, alerted.

Tooth shook her head, but tilted it back and forth right after. "Well, yes and no... I think. Jack attacked the pillars that held the lair up and I don't know why but he started attacking me too which explains my broken nose and also explains why Jack's knocked out right now." she explains, the last part sheepishly. Rapunzel looks at her and her nose intently before assessing the damage.

"It's broken alright, but nothing I can't fix. Jack on the other hand..." she and Tooth prop him up a bit more as Rapunzel holds his

face up to see how he's faring. She places a hand over his forehead. "He may have a fever, though I don't know how that can happen. You may have broken his jaw with your punch but I still need to have a good look at it before I make assumptions." she says and both girls then hand over the boy to North, who had held Jack properly and carried him with ease. Baby Tooth sat on Tooth's shoulder, handing over the piece of paper.

"We didn't find any sign of where Pitch could've gone but this is very important." she gives the picture to North, who carried Jack with a single arm. He scanned the picture and widened his eyes right after. "I never expected this."

"Neither have I."

Just as he was to speak again the above windows opened slowly, bringing in the snowstorm happening just outside. Hiccup and Sandy quickly come in, and as once they were inside the windows began to close. With both their dragons, sand and real, landing on the ground, they began brushing all the snow off of themselves and at the same time getting off of their creatures.

"That blizzard was intense; we could barely see anything outside. Hey Jack, would you mind toning it down, if you could do that?" but once the brunet looked up, he saw the commotion happening before him. "What's going on? What happened to Jack? And Tooth... why is your nose bleeding?"

"Why is your hand bleeding?" she says as a counter, and also noticing that his right hand looked swollen and that red liquid dripped from it to the floor.

"What?!" Rapunzel practically yells and stomps over to Hiccup, almost tripping on her dress. She pulled on his wrist and examined his hand, the boy though did not object. "Oh my god Hiccup, what did I just say?!"

"To watch myself, I know. But I didn't get into a fight, I just got shards after accidentally crushing a glass container." he explained to his friend as well as defend himself so he wouldn't get yelled at like a three year old would when done something bad. Unfortunately, Hiccup didn't realize what a mistake it was to tell Rapunzel the truthful reason why he had an injured hand. Sandy sighed, slapping his palm to his forehead.

"You weren't even in a fight but you still got injured?!" she almost screamed. It was then did Hiccup realize the mistake. He tried to open his mouth to defend himself once more but decided against it, since he probably would've said something else that would result in her yelling at him again.

With a large grunt, Rapunzel began plucking each shard of glass out of his hand, and with each pull Hiccup winced and silently said 'ow' in pain. "'Take care of yourself' they say. Ah no, don't bother watching your own self just worry about the girl." she mumbles, almost angrily. The other Guardians exchange glances, probably thinking it was best to not worry too much of the girl. After removing all the glass, she began wrapping her golden hair around it. "This will fix it."

"Thanks 'Punzel. And... uh, sorry." Hiccup quietly apologizes, throwing in a sheepish smile to go with it. Rapunzel looks at him, rolls her eyes, but returns the smile.

"No problem. But I really meant it. You have to watch yourself and worry about yourself, not just others. Bunny and Merida will probably come back in tip top shape. You should learn from them." she says and Hic rolls his own eyes. Right when she was about to heal him, a giant hole appears on the ground of the room. They all stop to look at it, but after a while, nothing comes out. Sandy was going to check to see what was keeping the final pair when they suddenly burst right out, and land on the ground with a large thump.

>They see Bunnymund, ragged with cuts that were bleeding, holding an injured and unconscious Merida, whose hair was now down and her bow's string was broken. Rapunzel didn't even made a quick remark about how even they hadn't come back a-okay because her complete shock and horror to see both her two closest companions were in that sort of condition. Hiccup looked the more devastated. "Merida!"<p>

The pair ran towards the Guardian, and the others followed right away. With Hiccup now the one holding Merida, Bunny immediately sat down on the floor and leaned his whole body over to Sandy, who was supporting him. "What happened?! Who did this?!" Tooth asked just as dismayed as the other two Spirits. Bunny breathed heavily, trying to speak. Rapunzel held his soft paw tightly, showing her distress.

And as he spoke, only one word escapes his mouth.
"Nightmares."

10. Four of a Kind

-A few hours earlier-

The tunnels the pair travelled were small and fit only for the one Guardian, but the redhead managed to slip through it, and at the same time enjoyed the way they both jetted through. Her hair, though tied up, still managed to flow through the rush of wind hitting her face. She was riding the tunnel on her own two boots as if surfing while the Guardian she was with was busily hopping just as fast she was, but maybe tad bit more. They stayed like that for a while until Merida could see a hole open up a few meters ahead of them, sloping the tunnel upwards. Bunnymund was the first to jump out, landing on his feet. Merida came right after, almost dropping to the ground on her back. Good thing she had quick reflexes which helped her land on her foot, knee, and hand. Standing straight back up, she brushed the dirt off her hands and looked around. They were out in the middle of a dim lighted forest. The trees were so tall it almost looked like they had disappeared into the sky.

"So this is The Woods, huh." she spoke up as both of them continued to just look around for signs of anything out of the ordinary.

"Doesn't look that special but I assure you this place has some things that you wouldn't think would be here." he warned her, bringing out his boomerang for emergencies. "Keep your guard up at all time."

"No need to tell me that." Merida replied, taking an arrow out from

her quiver and hooking it on to her ebony bow.

Looking over, Aster takes note of the weapon she had on hand. "A bow, hm? Seems like an odd choice of a weapon. Aren't you the kind of spirit that sort of has this magical power or something?" After readying her bow the girl looks at him plainly.

"I am, but that doesn't mean I can't have my own choice of weapon. I chose this bow because archery is a hobby of mine, and it's an item I've had with me since the day I became a Spirit." she turned the bow over to show him a small carved design on the handle of her bow. "I saw this on it when I found it. I'm not sure what it means, but it's a symbol of who I used to be. At least, that's what I believe."

"Ah, I understand." he proceeded to head further in, and she followed suit. "Seems you have an interesting story on hand there. Care to tell?"

"I thought you just said not to let our guard down?" she raised her eyebrow at him, hinting a small smile when she does so.

"I did. But let's make this sort of a challenge now. You tell your story and at the same time try not to let anything or anyone get to you as we walk through this dangerous forest."

"Hm. Alright, I'm game." she shrugged and loosened her shoulders, relaxing a bit. "What do you want me to talk about then?"

"Anything really. How about what you remember from after just being turned into a Spirit?" Merida thought for a while before finally answering.

"Too personal to say."

"The time where you came looking for your Center?" she shook her head. "How about Ryllis?"

"Ryllis? Wait, isn't that what you call Punzie?" he nodded to confirm her question. "I guess I can tell you, might as well add Hiccup along since I kind of met the two of them the same time."

"Go for it." he was all ears as he remained ahead and was in charge of leading themselves deeper into the forest. Merida closed her eyes for a few seconds, let out a short breath, and opened them again to tell him her story.

"It happened a few weeks after I became a Spirit. I was all alone, and my only companion was a Moon who never talks to me unless to teach me a little about my powers. I began creating summer; learning little by little how to control the heated weather and managing my ever increasing body temperature. As summer was coming to an end and as I watched all my hard work begin to disappear, I met the guy who was shifting the season into the next, that's when I met Hiccup." she rubbed the back of her neck and looked away with a sheepish grin. "Actually, I kinda got mad at him and yelled at him because he was killing all the greened leaves and cooling up the air after I've worked my butt off getting it there. He got scared of me, apologized, and left immediately, leaving that certain part of the forest unfinished. After a while, I found him there again, trying to finish what he had started. I tried to scare him off but this time he wasn't

as intimidated. Using a trick I just recently learned, I flared my hair up for a second to scare him. He took only a step back, whistled, and a black dragon came out and pounced at me."

"Toothless?" Bunny twisted his head to ask and saw her sigh a bit slightly.

"Toothless."

"Yikes, what happened then?"

"This time I was scared. It was the first time I saw a dragon, and I never really thought they existed. Not knowing what to do, all I did was scream for help and then I heard Hiccup immediately tell Toothless to get off of me, and he proceeded to help me up and apologize some more. He was nice to me even when I was mean to him. Then slowly we started being friends, and I wasn't alone in this world anymore." she tucked a hand in her dress pocket, holding the bow and arrow with her other.

Bunnymund turned around and began walking backwards so that he faced her while she talked. "That sounds great. How'd you met Ryllis? Did you scare her too?"

"Nope, it was more of Hic scaring her, this time." he raised his eyebrow, wondering how a boy like Hiccup would scare Rapunzel, other than with the accompaniment of the large black creature he was always with. "Me and Hic were spending time with each other, hanging out, the usual stuff. We learned that we had this cool ability that activates wherever we walk. Wherever I step I leave behind me scorched earth and grass while everywhere Hiccup went the leaves would change and later wither, as a result of our respective seasons. During spring we found this amazing field that blossomed with beautiful flowers and trees and it was simply too breathtaking to ignore. But when Hic took one step into the field the flowers began wilting and withering and started dying one by one. We saw the Spirit in charge of this season, Rapunzel, and she shrieked in horror at the sight. Hiccup tried to reassure her but whenever he'd come closer or take another step the plants kept dying, and she was so scared and upset she cried and ran away."

"Whoa, whoa, whoa. Are you telling me that fruit loop made Ryllis cry the first time they met?" Bunny had to pause the storytelling there to get this thing out of the way.

Merida blinked and looked at him with utter confusion. "Did you just call Hiccup a 'fruit loop'? Isn't that a kind of cereal? Is that supposed to be some sort of Australian thing I don't know about?"

"Never mind about the words I choose to use, can you answer my question?" when he saw her shrug slightly and mutter a 'kinda' the look on Aster's face changed his whole view on the male brunet now. Merida waved her hand to dismiss it.

"Anyway, do you want me to continue?" he mumbled for her to and turned around once again to lead them to another path while she finishes up her story.

"Desperate to make things right, Hiccup chased after her, and I followed him because I didn't want to be left alone. We followed Rapunzel until we reached a dead end at this giant moss rock. Hiccup tried apologizing to her but then suddenly she touched the rock and a tunnel opened through. Once she entered the entry disappeared and we were left outside. Extremely guilty, Hiccup's negative emotions affected his ability a lot more, killing the plants at a faster rate. When I told him about it, he swore and began concentrating on something and later all the plants stopped wilting. We couldn't fix any of it though, and we couldn't do anything to get to Rapunzel, so I decided we leave instead. Hiccup stayed, and I pretended to leave and stayed up a tree unnoticed, watching over Hic in case anything were to happen. Hours later and Rapunzel saw Hiccup trying to do something about the plants, trying to bring them back to life even though life isn't an asset of his abilities. Seeing how he's trying, she neared him and they talked and they kinda got in better terms. I joined in afterwards, and we had a lot of fun and we had a lot in common and that's when I learned those two would be my best friends. And I was right." she found herself smiling at the memory of meeting the brunet and blonde. That day was an important day for them. They formed a bond and friendship that they knew wouldn't break as easily, and she's holding that dear.

"Guess you guys aren't half bad." he complimented.

"No objections there." they were about to share a hearty laugh when a rustle in the woods distracted them, and they both armed their weapons right away, pointed bow and boomerang at all possible directions of where the sound could've come from. Mer glanced at the Guardian, who didn't speak and merely nudged his head towards a path, telling her to follow. Nodding, the pair began to walk slowly, being as silent and as stealthy as possible. Up ahead was a clearing, and they both ducked behind some bushes to see if there was anything suspicious. Peeking and raising their heads slightly, they see something they never imagined would be there.

An army of dark Nightmares lined up in rows and columns, all looking like they were ready for war and for battle. The Nightmares were in four forms now and was no longer in the same old Stallion Bunnymund remembers from ten months ago. The Stallion was still there though, but the added forms were the forms of creatures such as Wolves, Dragons, and Bears. The thought and the sight of the Bear Nightmares gave Merida a chill for some reason. "Well this is something now isn't it..."

"Pitch had really done it this time... an army. What could he possibly need an army for? Unless..." the look on Bunnymund's face was a struck of realization, and a slight hint of horror. He placed a paw urgently on the redhead's shoulder. "We need to tell the others immediately."

"Ohoho, leaving so soon now?" the two stood up and spun in place, alerted by the voice they just heard. A woman with dark ebony hair wearing a medieval styled dress stands in front of them, looking relaxed and casual. She was examining her painted nails as the pair brought their weapons up. "But you've just arrived now my dears; wouldn't you want to see a little bit more?"

Merida didn't move, her bow was all ready to strike. When the woman took one small step closer towards them she let loose the arrow, and

it shot through the air swiftly. The woman merely twisted to dodge and suddenly a ghastly looking sphere starts manifesting in the palm of her hand as she turns, and its dark violet color was not reassuring. She threw it like a ball, and it aimed for Bunnymund. The Guardian was just going to move out of the way to dodge but halfway near the sphere disappeared into a blur. It had increased in speed, and he couldn't track it. Straight from impulse, Merida had launched herself in front of him, taking the hit.

But the impact was too strong, and it managed to blow both of them back, sending them tumbling to the ground. Bunnymund sat up immediately, and Merida lay on top of him, cringing in pain as her body pulses dangerously purple. Bunny gently lays her on the grass as she hugs herself. He looks over to the woman, and brought out a handful of egg bombs to hold in his free hand. The woman is not intimidated, and charges up more spheres of power in both of her hands. Bunnymund jumps and throws his boomerang then quickly follows up with a handful of his eggs. The woman continues to gracefully evade his attacks and shoots harmful orbs of power as her weapon. With each speedy shoot she throws at him, the Guardian has only barely managed to avoid it, and has been hit on his sides, arms, and legs for countless of times now. He finds himself out of bombs, and he looks around for any other possible long range weapons rather than his own.

His gaze is fixed upon the bow and quiver of arrows that lay on the ground beside the poisoned girl. Without a second thought he crouches and grabs the weapon, fixing an arrow into the bow as swiftly as he can. But before he could release, the arc of the weapon begins to slowly change color from black to red, and then it began heating up tremendously. It singed his fur and burned his paw and it resulted in him dropping the flaming weapon to the ground as it began to cool back down, the bowstring snapped in half as he did so. He's sort of wondered why the girl kept the bow so close to her all the time; this must've been the answer to that mystery.

In his short distraction, the woman had called upon a batch of the Nightmares to surround the wounded pair. One of each creature followed her command and charged towards the human animal hybrid. He struck them with his kicks and weapon, reducing them back to just black sand. While he was fighting he's noticed that they're slowly switching targets, and were now aiming for the idle redhead. Defending himself and his partner now, Bunnymund struggles to even stay standing. On the other hand, the medieval looking woman had begun charging up an insanely powerful looking orb that rustled the wind and the trees. He saw the danger in this, and he needed to act fast.

Hurrying around he grabbed Merida and hung her over his shoulder and also grabbed her weapon by the broken bowstring as to not get burned again. The woman cackles malevolently. "It was nice knowing you...not." she says as she releases the orb. Once it escapes her hold it shoots through like a jet, and Bunnymund immediately taps his foot on the ground right as the orb makes an impact.

The smoke it made begins to disappear and fade and later reveals that the pair had managed to escape the blast.

~!~

-Present Time-

"So it's been decided. Pitch's new lair is in The Woods and he's building an army. Why he is doing so is left unanswered still but part of the reason is quite obvious. I must reflect on this." North mutters, a hand already stroking his white beard. He looks at the others. "In the meantime I think it's best to fix up the others. Bring them to the Infirmary room; it's just on the opposite side of my workshop." Nodding, those who weren't injured began easing those who were. Hiccup carried Merida, Tooth helped Jack after easing him out of North's arms, and Bunnymund limped while Rapunzel supported him.

When the six of them had left the room, North pulled himself up a chair and sat tiredly on it, sighing loud and placing his large hands on his face. The other remaining Guardian walked beside him and placed a reassuring yellow hand on his arm. "What now...? What are we supposed to do now that Pitch is... you know." he looked over to his friend, who at first had his lips curled up in thinking but had soon looked at him with a more relaxed and gleeful expression.

Images of sand conjured up and above the little man's head, forming into a pattern of events that looked all too familiar from North's eyes. It wasn't hard to figure out what he was trying to say. He was simply telling him of a story of how they had defeated Pitch before, and how they succeeded without entirely losing all hope. For a moment it made him smile, but it left him sighing once more.

"I know, Sandy. But I'm afraid it's going to take more than just hope to defeat Pitch now."

The Sandman's eyebrows furrowed in seriousness and he nods in agreement at what he says.

~!~

Much later in the Infirmary room, Rapunzel managed to patch everyone up and all they were doing now were resting on the available beds that were already there. Merida had been poisoned, from Rapunzel's analysis, and she managed to make a tonic to take the poison away just in time before it could fatally damage her friend. Hiccup's hand had bandages wrapped around it and he sat on the side of his female friend's bed, holding her hand as he watched her. On the bed right beside, Bunnymund was in bandages from head to foot, but not entirely. Toothiana this time was busily feeding her fellow Guardian some Carrot Soup, of which the Yetis had made for him to feel better with. Said Yetis, and a couple Tooth Fairies, waited anxiously outside the door for the others to get better soon.

Rapunzel, after finishing up with Bunnymund, walked over to Jack's bedside. She gathered some of her hair and was about to place it at his cheek when suddenly his eyes just shot wide open. Without warning, he sits up and abruptly screams at the top of his lungs as his loud voice echoes through the room. Everyone jumped in surprise and the sudden scream made Toothiana drop the bowl of soup unto Bunny, who yelped in pain. "SWEET MACKEREL ON A BARBIE!"

Rapunzel tried to calm him down. "Jack! Jack it's fine! It's okay!" she told him and also shushed him and slowly his voice lowered until he was no longer screaming. He heaved, gulping and gasping for air

while the blonde gently had him lay back down. His eyes shifted around, taking to account his surroundings.

"Where... where am I? What happened?" he asked.

"You're back at the North Pole. Toothiana said you freaked out and attacked Pitch's lair, bringing the place down. You even attacked her so she had to knock you out of it, literally." when Jack tried moving his jaw it ached painfully and he massaged it with his hand.

Looking over to his partner, he says. "Sorry... Tooth."

"It's okay, Jack. You just said some words that, uhm... triggered me." she daftly smiled at him and continued to help Bunnymund and a Yeti brush off the soup that stained. Jack then focused his gaze on the next bed, where he saw Hiccup looking right back at him with this plain look that seemed to be a usual thing he had on his face all the time.

"What happened to your hand? Got into a fight?" Rapunzel turned to look at the brunet as well, and puffed up her cheeks in irritation once the spirit reminded her about it. Hiccup turned away and sheepishly answered.

"Long story."

"Alright then." he returned his attention back to his healer. "Well my jaw hurts like hell. Do you have anything that can fix it or something?"

"I do, actually. I just need you to lay back, relax, and... don't freak out." he had an eyebrow raised precariously when she told him not to freak out. What could she possibly do that would freak him out at all? When he saw her gathering up her long blonde hair his mouth shaped into a small 'o' and he then realized what she was going to do.

Now holding a handful of her locks once again she leans her hand at the side of Jack's face and placed it at the bruised cheek. Jack leans his head over to rest on her hand, very slightly feeling the soft, warm touch of her fingertips brushing against the skin of his face. He momentarily shut his eyes, relishing the moment and opened them once again to watch what she's planning to do next.

Taking a deep breath, Rapunzel begins to sing a song she's sung to the others much earlier.

_Flower gleam and glow
>Let your powers shine
Make the clock reverse
>Bring back what once was mine

The roots of her hair began their immediate glow of golden, and later flowed down the long strands until it reaches each end, Rapunzel's hair only long enough to reach the other side of the bed next to Jack's. The light filled the room once again, and once again everyone watched in awe and silence at the beautiful wonder. Jack's eyes never left the girl, and though the latter's own were shut close in concentration of singing, he had hoped that she could be staring back just as intently as he was.

_Heal what has been hurt
>Change the fate's design
Save what has been lost
>Bring back what once was mine

Toothiana, while watching with all the others in the room and the others peeking into the room to see the scene that was currently happening, could hear a faint and quiet voice joining Rapunzel in her singing. Glancing towards her back, she sees Hiccup as the one singing along. He wasn't transfixed at Rapunzel's special ability just like everyone else, he was simply looking at his redheaded friend, squeezing her hand in his and muttering the words of the song as if he's heard it for more than a hundred times already.

What once was mine

When the song ended, the glowing did as well. The yellow light of the room faded slowly, until the room was back to its same plain colors. Rapunzel sighed in a little exhaustion, unnoticeably smiled, and took back her hand away from his face. Jack could feel his cheek and jaw feel so much better, and the pain had been easily swept away. He continued to look at Rapunzel, and his own smile found its way to rest on his pale little face. "That's the one."

A bit confused, the blonde girl asks him. "I'm sorry... what is?"

Realizing now and once again remembering too late that she does not remember, Jack's cheeks lit up in a hue of pink out of embarrassment. "Oh. Ahaha... its uhm... I'm just talking about that... that small smile you always make after you sing that song."

"Wha..." she covered her mouth, completely embarrassed as well of the fact that someone other than her two closest friends in the world knows about her little uncontrollable habit. "How did you know that...?" she asks him in a low whisper.

Jack thinks and answers with the only answer he can say that doesn't make anything else awkward and confusing. "I... I can't really say..."

"Oh, okay then."

"Punzel." the pair look over to Hiccup, who had interrupted their conversation with a mildly urgent call of Rapunzel's name. "Merida's awake."

"Merida!" she stood up from Jack's bed and left his side, not noticing the sigh he makes when she does. Hurrying herself she this time sits on Merida's other side, the opposite of the one Hiccup is occupying. The Summer Spirit's eyes were dreary but she still held that fiery flare of passion in it that reassured the both of them sitting beside her. Rapunzel let out a breath of relief. "Thank god you're alright."

"Of course I'm alright. You healed me didn't you?" she wearily directed a grin to her female friend who chuckled and gave her a friendly kiss on the forehead.

"Yeah well even if I _am _an amazing healer, you gotta watch out for yourself. I told you that."

"Alright, alright, I will from now on look after myself and not concern myself too much about Punzie." she says in a joking tone even at her current state. She felt her hand being squeezed in Hiccup's and when she looks at him she can feel him tightening his grip.

"You had me worried, Merida."

With her free hand she pats it over to the brunet's. "You don't have to be, all the time. Quit being a worry wart, Hiccup. It'll give you wrinkles." her jokes lightened the mood between the trio and their chuckles and laughs made it seem like nothing bad had happened at all. "So, if you don't mind me asking. What happened? Last I remember I was with Bunnymund at The Woods fighting off this crazy lady."

They all turned to the furred Guardian, who had already washed away all the spilled soup earlier. "You save me back there, taking that first hit in place of me."

"Oh yeah that. Sorry to say Aster but you owe me one now." she smirked in triumph but when he waved his finger she knew there were still more to the story.

"I don't think so missy. Right after you took the hit I had to face off with the woman by myself. Then later those Nightmares we saw helped her attack me, and I had to retreat because she was charging off with another large scale attack I knew I couldn't dodge and or take. And I believe I don't owe you anything." Merida nodded in agreement after hearing the rest and then smiled in gratitude.

"Thanks for saving me."

"Anytime." After regarding Toothiana with another joke and with either another smile or grin, Merida found herself shifting her gaze to the next bed, and saw that Jack was looking straight at her. Her grin disappeared and her mouth formed a thin line.

Already feeling the tension seep in, Jack regarded her with a simple question. "How you holding up?"

It took her a while to answer, but she answered nonetheless.

"Okay."

"Glad to hear it." he expected a smile from her to him just like she did to the others but she didn't and swiftly turned her head away from him, not even giving him a nod. But he had to accept the fact that he needs to gain their trust and friendship again if he ever wants to have that same bond they shared all those years ago.

Their happy and light conversations were disrupted and cut short when suddenly the whole place rumbled and shook, as if there was an earthquake. Everyone thought it was though, but it ceased just a few seconds later and it made all of them wonder what in the world just happened. Bunny's large ears twitched and he could hear roars and cries of certain animals not too far away. Then, by the large clear window they all jump in surprise as they see a flood of black creatures fly by. As if they weren't as alerted enough, North's voice boomed from the outside until later he was let in after the yetis

made a way through for him to go into the room. He had his coat and hat on and in his two large hands were his two swords and choice of weapon. "Everyone! The Pole is being attacked!"

"By what?" and as Hiccup asked a Horse Nightmare burst through the glass window, breaking as its pieces fell to the ground. By sheer impulse everyone had pitched in to destroy it and it crumbled away like dust.

Merida looked at her friend and rolled her eyes. "Do you even have to ask?"

North had already stormed out the room with the other Yetis following him as they all start to join the battle. Hiccup and Toothiana didn't think twice as they hurried out as well. With Tooth already in the air she jetted through, slamming a fist at a wolf nightmare's face right as she does so. Hiccup looked around and saw Yeti and Nightmares fighting off in a huff. He ran to the edge and jumped to stand at the wooden railing. Bringing his hands up he whistles in a call.

A roar followed right after and Hiccup jumped off, falling right into the saddle of his trusted companion and dragon. He hooked his foot to the gears and they flew high.

"My turn to shine." Merida had tossed away the white blanket that was on her and sat up at the edge of the bed, hurriedly slipping on her white boots as she does so. Bunnymund does the same, getting ready as he grabs his boomerang that had been on the desk by his bed this whole time. Jack was already up, after that Horse Nightmare broke the window the snowstorm outside began to rage its natural force towards the inside, and he had to calm it down so the room wouldn't be frozen in less than a few minutes. He already has his staff on hand, as usual.

Once she grabbed her bow, she it's broken string and turned to Bunnymund, showing it to him. "Mind explaining me what happened to my bow?"

"You tell me. It burned my paw when I held it and it snapped the string in half." the Guardian defends.

"Okay, first rule. Can't touch my bow, only I can and that's a fact." holding it by the arc she took both end of the strings with her free hand and held them in place with her two fingers. The smell of something burning filled the air and when Merida let it go it seemed good as new.

After fixing her weapon, Merida tried standing up but fell to her knees quite immediately. Rushing to her side, Rapunzel pulls her back to her feet. "Merida, you're still weak from the tonic that I gave you. It's supposed to keep your muscles relaxed and you're not supposed to be moving around just yet." after receiving a grunt from the girl she heard the two other boys mutter an 'ow' as they also try to move around. "You guys too."

"Well Ryllis we can't just sit here! We have to fight or else they'll destroy the entire North Pole!"

"Isn't there anything you can do, Rapunzel?" she saw Jack's look of

desperation and the rare pleading faces on the other pair. Sighing just a bit, she knew she couldn't say 'no' to them. On the other hand, she knew she was going to be so tired later on but she must do what she can.

"Alright you guys, I think this will help." she held her hand and palms outwards then flicked her wrist up in a swift manner. The wooden flooring creaked and cracked until later three plants started to grow out and in front of the two guardians and the spirit. Its stem was thick and green and seconds later a bud grew and blossomed at the very tip of it. The flower was blue with silver streaks. "Had to be creative with this one, it sort of consumed a very significant portion of my power to have to create it but here it is. No time for naming the new flower, just eat it and it'll give you momentary regeneration abilities. Don't forget to chew." the three of them each plucked the floret and without a sliver of doubt began to chew it whole. The taste was bland and horrible, making all of them wince. But as they swallow the small bits and pieces they felt like they were getting better and stronger. After finishing, they gave Rapunzel a smile.

"Okay. You guys ready for this?" the blonde spring spirit asked them as they spun their weapons in their hand.

"Ready."

End
file.